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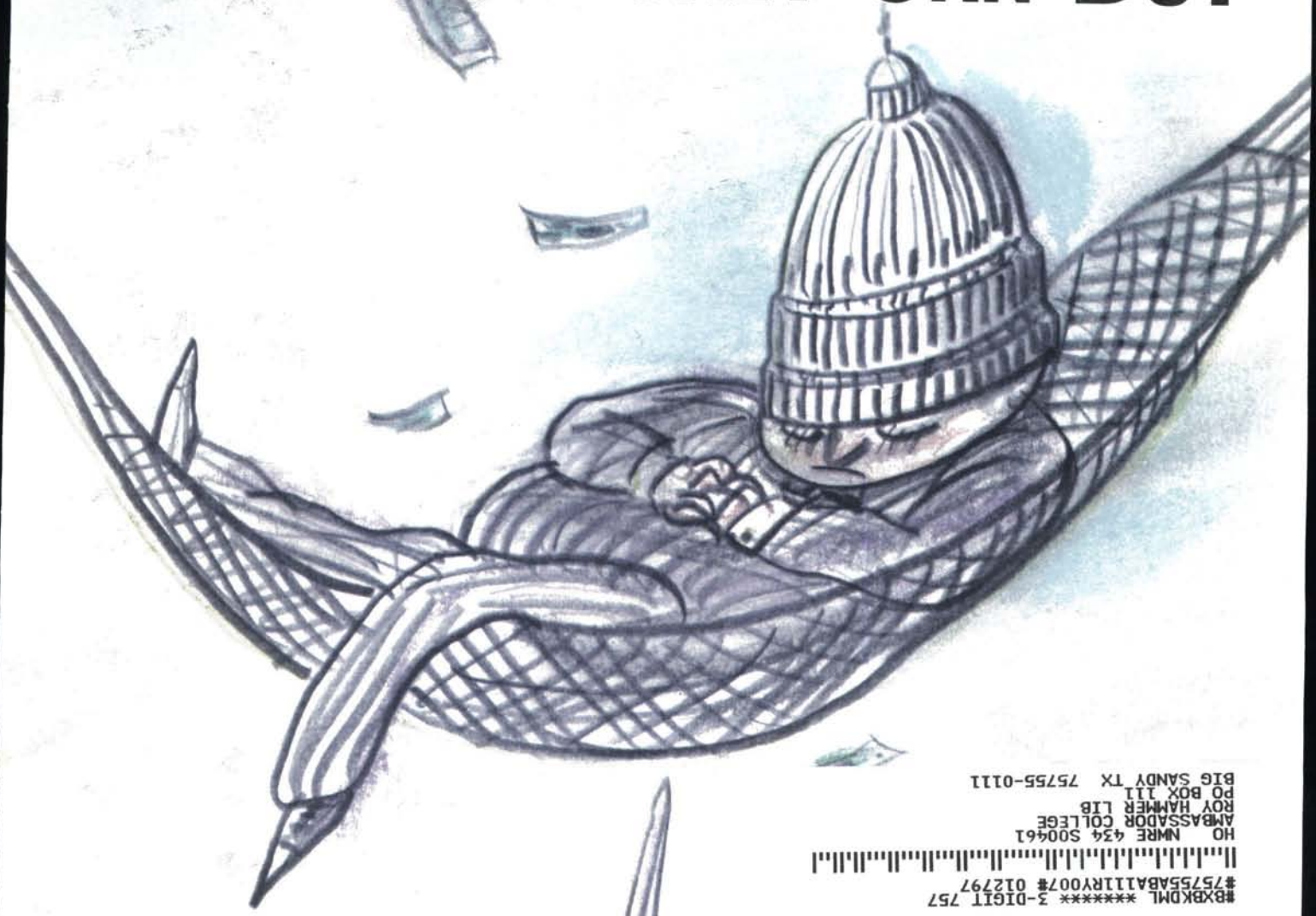

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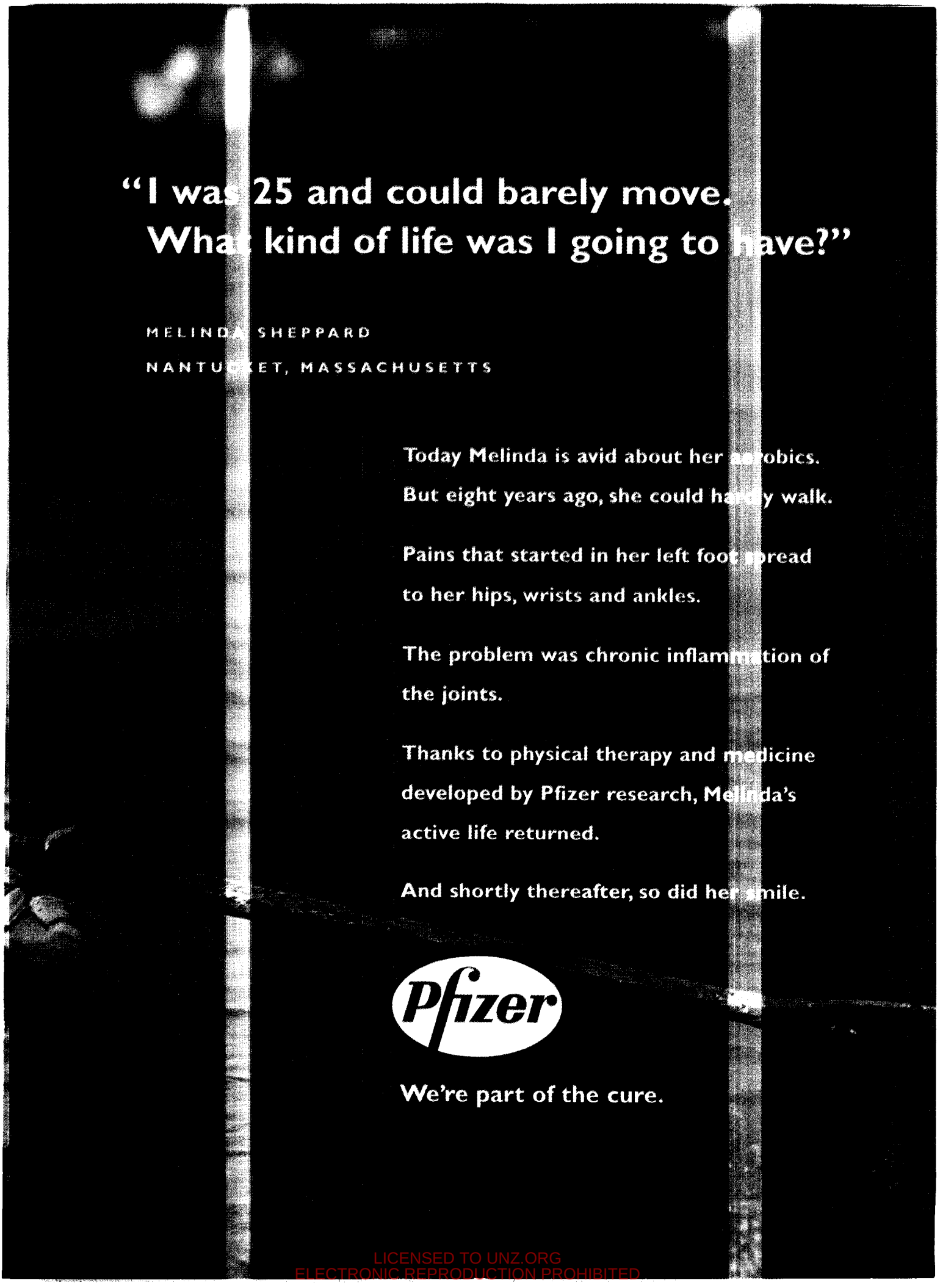
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FROM WASHINGTON

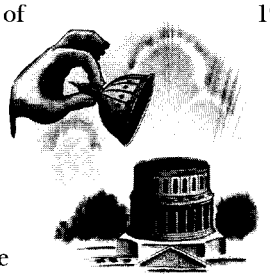
Plan B

On the public relations front, the immediate future does not bode well for the White House. For the mainstream media, the fund-raising scandal has become a beat, and congressional investigations by Fred Thompson in the Senate and Dan Burton in the House guarantee that the story will stay alive for the rest of this year. Although Attorney General Janet Reno has so far staved off calls for an independent counsel, the Justice Department investigation continues and it seems almost certain to eventually establish that the People's Republic of China pumped, or attempted to pump, large sums of money into the Democratic National Committee and related entities. Kenneth Starr is looking into the question of why various interested parties and friends of Bill Clinton paid some $400,000 to the disgraced Webster Hubbell while he was awaiting sentence for his embezzlement conviction. There are a few bright rays here and there: Thompson has promised to look into Republican fund-raising improprieties as well as Democratic ones, and Burton's probe was tarnished by a March 19 *Washington Post* story alleging that Burton had himself indulged in a particularly heavy-handed attempt to shake down a lobbyist. But the Rose Garden is not coming up roses.

One of the White House's hopes for damage-containment has been to change the subject from the appalling acts committed by its fund-raising operation to the appalling acts committed by everyone else's, and to demand that everyone stop being appalling altogether. The specific vehicle for achieving this state of grace is the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, of which President Clinton has frequently urged passage. But the Republican majority has no interest in passing McCain-Feingold as it is currently written; and while it is true that Thompson's hearings might gin up enough public outrage to force a change of heart, it is also true that members of Congress in both parties are going to be less and less interested in restricting campaign contributions as they get closer to the 1998 campaign.

An elegant idea has occurred to the White House: continue pushing McCain-Feingold while simultaneously attempting to bypass Congress entirely. The chief villain in the corruption of the parties by corporate money is the so-called soft money, the unlimited contributions that special interests may give to the national committees for ostensible use by their state parties and for "party building." McCain-Feingold would ban soft money, but Congress doesn't want to pass McCain-Feingold. But what if Congress isn't necessary?

For more than a month now, the president and his advisers have been mulling the possibility of sharply curtailing the use of soft money through a regulatory ruling by the Federal Election Commission. In a plan that is still a work in progress, the White House would, while continuing its calls to pass McCain-Feingold, also petition the FEC to write new regulations curtailing the use of soft money in terms similar to that which would be achieved under McCain-Feingold. Clinton supports the idea, and there is no serious opposition to it within the White House, only discussions over timing and the exact wording of the petition to the FEC. There was discussion of announcing the plan in Clinton's March 8 radio address, but that was postponed. The expectation within the White House now is that the proposal will go forward, and probably will be announced within the next few months, possibly within the next several weeks.



Under a current version of the proposal, the White House would formally request that the FEC "prohibit national political parties (and their congressional campaign committees and agents) from soliciting or receiving any funds not subject to the limitations or prohibitions of the Federal Campaign Act." (This would preclude, for example, contributions directly from corporate or union treasuries, or contributions from individuals in excess of the amount an individual can give to a federal party.) The White House would also ask the FEC to "prohibit any federal officeholder or candidate from soliciting or receiving" soft money. This would be a good deal less than a blanket prohibition—Clinton, after all, did not technically solicit or receive the millions in soft money that he helped raise last year—but it would mean the end of direct solicitations, such as those made by Vice President Gore.

Finally, the White House would petition the FEC to rule that any money spent "by a political party during a federal election year for any activity that influences a federal election ... must be paid for from funds subject to" the federal election laws. This would mean that soft money could not be used, as it is now, for a "get-out-the-vote drive, generic advertising or any communication that mentions a federal candidate." As the proposal notes, this "would end the allocation system ... under which 'hard' and 'soft' money are mixed for campaign activities that affect both state and federal elections."

The White House's idea is a limited one, but as far as it goes it is smart and good. The soft money loophole was created in part by an FEC ruling in 1978 that non-federal political activities need not be subject to the campaign spending limits imposed by the post-Watergate Federal Election Campaign Act, but could be financed according to state law. That loophole has since been stretched and bent and distended out of all recognition, reaching its utmost ludicrous extremes in 1996, with the national parties spending millions through their state parties on "issues advertising": television commercials that were designed and scheduled by the national committees and that, in all but name, were advertisements for federal candidates. Why can't the FEC make a new ruling and shrink the loophole?

Perhaps it can. Certainly it should. But the matter is not as simple as that. Although the White House may petition the FEC (as may anybody else), the FEC may reject the petition, on the grounds that the ruling would exceed the agency's statutory authority, or that it would be unconstitutional or, for that matter, that the commissioners just don't like it. Even if the FEC does make the ruling the White House seeks, the process of public comment and debate that must precede the ruling will likely take a year or more. And any ruling seeking to limit soft money contributions in any serious way will face immediate and multiple challenges in court, which could tie up implementation for another year or so.

Given all these caveats, it is tempting to think of the petition plan as a diversion: a stunt, not a policy. And maybe some in the White House think of it that way. Clinton's critics will surely mock it as a piece of *ex post fundo* piety. But the idea is nevertheless sound and nevertheless right, and the president should go out on a limb for it, crutches and all.

MICHAEL KELLY

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

APRIL 7, 1997

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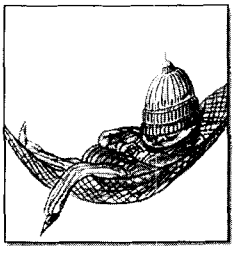

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 216, Number 14, Issue 4,290, April 7, 1997. (Printed in the U.S. on March 19, 1997.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 14 & 21, Aug. 11 & 18, and Sept. 8 & 15, 1997) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic Advertising Sales Office (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling).

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(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. For subscription problems call 800-827-1289.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Double D.A.R.E.

To the editors:

In "Don't You D.A.R.E." (March 3), Stephen Glass charges that the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) responded to pressure by DARE America when it decided not to publish the full report of the Research Triangle Institute's (RTI) study of DARE. As the public record available to Glass reflects, these allegations are not true. In fact, we did release the report. However, we decided not to include the report in our publications series because of concerns raised by independent reviewers regarding the soundness of the study's methodology. As is our standard practice, NIJ only publishes the full reports of research that we believe will have wide utility in the criminal justice or research field.

When the RTI study was submitted to NIJ, we followed our usual practice of subjecting the research findings to peer review by independent researchers. The peer reviewers questioned the scientific basis for RTI's comparison between DARE and similar but not identical programs that target older children and involve specific behaviors such as cigarette smoking and alcohol consumption. To assess these initial concerns, NIJ subjected the report to another, more focused, independent review that raised even larger doubts about the scientific validity of RTI's findings.

Because of the reviewers' concerns about the study's scientific methodology, NIJ independently decided not to include the RTI study in its publications series "Research in Brief." This decision was consistent with our policy that publications in this series should meet the standards established in our peer review process. It is not at all unusual for NIJ to decline to publish a report in this series, particularly when a study has raised concerns among peer reviewers. NIJ did, however, release the entire RTI report to the public and published a summary of the report, which included information regarding the study's findings on DARE's impact. This summary was widely distributed and is available free of charge. The entire report is also available through our reference service upon request at the cost of reproduction.

JEREMY TRAVIS
Director, National Institute of Justice
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

We commend TNR for its courage in publishing a fine piece of investigative reporting on DARE. We continue to stand by our DARE report to the NIJ, and by the article we published in the *American Journal of Public Health*: our findings indicated that DARE's short-term effectiveness for reducing or preventing drug use was small, and less than for other drug prevention programs.

We confirm the accuracy of TNR's account regarding our DARE research, with one exception. The implication that either of us ever feared for our jobs is untrue; on the contrary, RTI stood by us, our *AJPH* article and our report. In fact, RTI published an article in its own staff newsletter presenting the DARE episode as a model of scientific integrity because we reported the facts as we saw them and did not yield to NIJ's and DARE's inappropriate pressure to alter key portions of our findings. In addition, in 1994 RTI released our DARE report on its own, a summary of which may be found on RTI's web site (http://www.rti.org/hypo_etc/dare.html).

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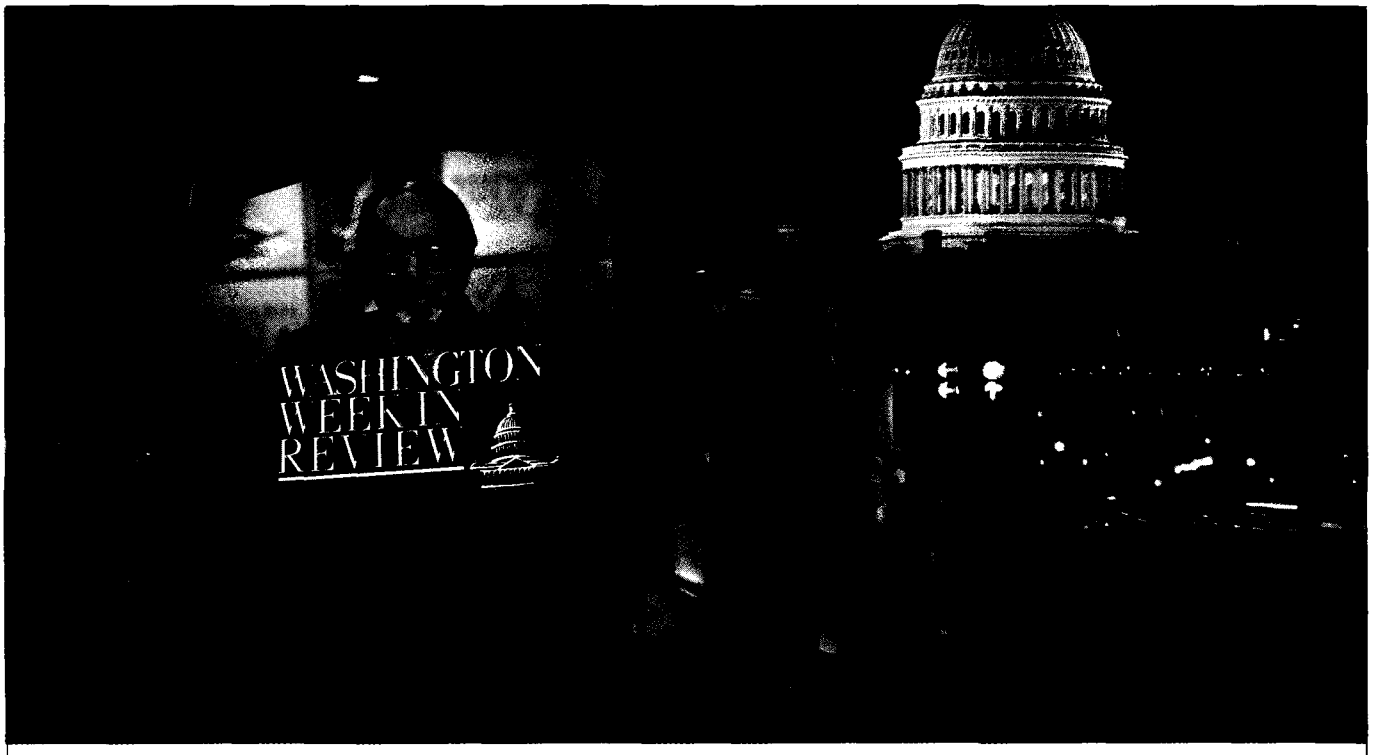

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To the editors:
I sent a copy of "Don't You D.A.R.E." to our head sheriff, who's responsible for administering the DARE program in the schools in the unincorporated areas of our county. He said in response that he didn't read the article, he didn't know or care or care to know that DARE didn't work and wasted money, he wasn't going to so much as lift a finger to find out, wouldn't even write a letter or make a phone call to other agencies that might be interested, and so forth.

He was getting lots of nice tax money to administer the DARE program, and so that, by God, was what he was going to do until somebody came along and told him differently. And every year, at budget time, he would continue to flood the media with scary "facts" that the county is in the middle (eeeeek!) of a teen drug epidemic, please give his office more nice money, thank you. So, it isn't only quasi-religious zealotry that keeps DARE in place. It's indifference. And E-Z money.

ANN CALHOUN
Los Osos, California

Short circuit

To the editors:
Jonathan Weisman ("Loose Juice," March 3) has perpetuated a number of myths regarding the utility industry's position on the deregulation of the U.S. electric market. For example, Weisman fails to mention that stranded cost recovery was mandated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in its wholesale competition rules last April; was affirmed in the 1996 Economic Report of the President; and has been endorsed by the states that have enacted laws for retail competition.

Under regulation, utilities made investments and were required to purchase power under an outdated law intended to spur efficiency, the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978. To keep rates stable, regulators required utilities to spread out the payment on these facilities over thirty years. Where regulators determined that utilities made investments that went beyond their obligatory scope, those investments were denied—and approximately $19 billion in costs was disallowed in the late 1980s.

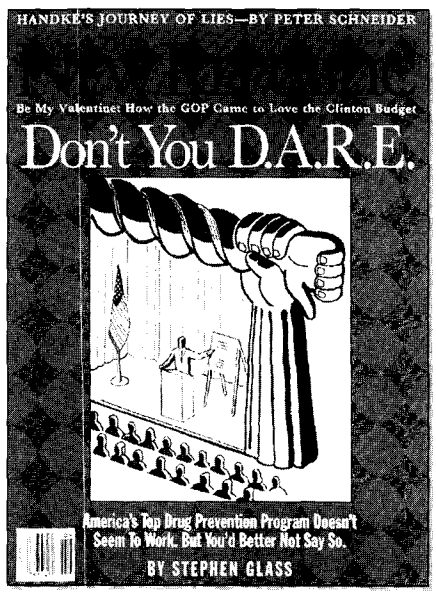
As competition increases in this industry, those costs incurred under the regulatory regime will not disappear. Therefore, a transition period between regulation and competition should be allowed. During this period, utilities will continue to work to reduce costs. This view for a transition period has been mirrored in other deregulated industries.

The fact that this may trouble our potential competitors does not make the issue analogous to the savings and loan debacle. Costs under a regulatory regime, approved by regulators, are far from the profligate behavior that fueled the thrifts' collapse after the savings and loan industry was deregulated.

M. WILLIAM BRIER
Edison Electric Institute
Washington, D.C.

Intel-ligence

To the editors:
David E. Sanger, in his review of *Only the Paranoid Survive* by Andrew S. Grove ("Mr. Chips," March 3), paraphrases Intel's rationale for concentrating on microprocessors thusly: "you can't make microprocessors at a memory-chip fabrication site any more easily than you can make airplanes at a bicycle factory."


HANDKE'S JOURNEY OF LIES—BY PETER SCHNEIDER
Be My Valentine: How the GOP Came to Love the Clinton Budget
Don't You D.A.R.E.
America's Top Drug Prevention Program Doesn't Seem To Work. But You'd Better Not Say So.
BY STEPHEN GLASS

Maybe Sanger was aware that the latter is precisely what the Wright brothers did in Ohio roughly ninety-four years ago, and he chose this analogy to lampoon Intel's temporary shortsightedness. But the purpose behind Sanger's statement that Intel was put together in 1986 in a "business plan that was pockmarked with typographical errors" (the year, if memory—pardon the expression—serves me, was 1968) is certain to elude even those with the most highly developed sense of irony.

JAMES P. BALLOT
New York, New York

Hit and run

To the editors:
Robyn Gearey's authoritative baseball talk in "Give Her the Tools" (March 3) apparently won her far more respect than she deserved, for it lacks the crucial ending. The complete aphorism, attributed to Casey Stengel, is "Good pitching will always stop good hitting *and vice-versa*."

IRWIN TESSMAN
West Lafayette, Indiana

*Journal*ism

To the editors:
William Powers's "Family News Values" (March 3) presents a journalist's view of *The Wall Street Journal*'s successes and an investor's view of why Dow Jones & Co. is a good stock to avoid. After the Bancroft family's years of subpar performance in running Dow Jones, the implosion of the company's Telerate unit and the firm's policy of one share equals less than one vote, it is hard to believe that there are some apologists left. But why should fiduciary responsibility matter when the Bancroft family answers to a higher calling, Powers's journalistic expectations?

Powers offers no evidence that the *Journal*'s supposedly first-rate news and editorial divisions are responsible for its financial success. That quality journalism leads to a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is not a truism in American media. Maybe the unprecedented bull market and rapid mutual fund growth have more to do with stock underwriters and fund managers advertising in the *Journal* than any prosaic wonders.

Also, how can the *Journal*'s editorial division be called successful? They failed in their single-minded mission: to defeat Bill Clinton.

God forbid if a well-managed corporation took over Dow Jones, invested capital prudently, preserved jobs and actually made money for shareholders. The *Journal*'s editorial page editors might learn something about Wall Street.

ANDREW LERNER
New York, New York

Let me get this straight

To the editors:
Regarding "For America's Sake" (March 24): Let me get this straight. Michael Kelly, editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC, thinks *I'm* Al Gore's flack?

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS
New York, New York

Michael Kelly replies:
I know that the journalistic concept of getting it straight is new to Mr. Stephanopoulos, and no doubt difficult to grasp (here's one easy way to remember what "straight" means: it's the opposite of spin), but I would have thought he could have accurately reported the gist of a single short paragraph. I didn't write that Mr. Stephanopoulos was Al Gore's flack. I wrote that he was Bill Clinton's flack.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

APRIL 7, 1997

NEWT GETS ONE RIGHT

In 1995, House Speaker Newt Gingrich hailed his package of tax cuts as "the crown jewel of the Contract With America." The Georgia Republican saw tax cutting not merely as a political and economic necessity but, like so many of his visions, as a higher calling. "This is a moral fight," he insisted. But, last week, Gingrich conceded that his four-year crusade might not be an ethical imperative after all. His epiphany: the sacred tax cuts endanger his even holier balanced budget plan. So, in typical Gingrichian fashion, he concluded that scrapping the tax cut was not merely smart but righteous. "The moral imperative is to balance the budget," he declared.

Well, sometimes righteousness is actually appropriate. Newt, of all people, has done the right thing on taxes. And it was President Clinton, of all people, who helped him see the light. Clinton transformed Gingrich into the most unpopular politician in America and defeated his revolution with television commercials accusing the speaker of slashing popular government services to fund a tax cut for the wealthy.

But, after the election, Clinton had his own epiphany: he held no particular grudge against tax cuts for the wealthy, just those that forced cuts in popular government services. Republicans, gripped by post-election bipartisan euphoria, happily swallowed this formulation. "We find ourselves here with a Democratic president and a Republican Congress," Gingrich lectured his colleagues, "and we have an absolute moral obligation to make this system work." Clinton's compromise, of course, had one catch: the Republicans had to come up with the spending cuts to pay for their tax cuts themselves. And slowly the fog of cooperation began to burn away, and Gingrich began to realize that he was in the exact same bind as he was two years ago. If you balance the budget and cut taxes, you have to cut popular government services—the reason he tried to combine them in the first place.

So Gingrich converted, at least tactically. But the difference between a balanced budget agreement with a tax cut and one without a tax cut is more than tactical. It is, well, moral. Indeed, tax cutting undermines the very justification for and principles behind balancing the budget. This was the essence of the Democratic attacks that reduced the buoyant revolutionary into the sulking passenger of Air Force One. Though the subtext of Clinton's Medicare campaign was demagogic—it ignored the program's exploding costs and the fact that Clinton had proposed to cut Medicare himself—the campaign was literally true. The Republican budget did seek to cut Medicare, and it also sought to give a tax cut that mainly helped the rich, and the two acts were arguably linked. More importantly, the Democratic ads hinted at a deeper truth: the Republican balanced budget plan had more to do with income redistribution than with fiscal responsibility. The problem with tax cuts goes beyond lost government revenue. Asking a voter to give up health benefits in order to boost national savings and reduce interest rates is an ethically different proposition from asking him to sacrifice health benefits so that his boss can have a swimming pool.

This distinction does not appear to weigh too heavily on Gingrich's conscience. Still, he understands that his party cannot hold Congress forever if it fails to pass any substantial legislation. The Republicans have ordained the balanced budget as their highest goal. But they cannot achieve it without help from Democrats, and Democrats will not support a budget designed to enrich Republican voters. Of course, if Republicans stop insisting on including their tax cut in the budget, they have a perfect right to demand that Clinton drop his education tax cuts, too. If they don't get to pay off their constituents, he shouldn't get to pay off his.

The president hasn't fully reciprocated, but he has made conciliatory noises. Not so Gingrich's conservative colleagues, who have instead taken the speaker's latest heresy as another excuse to mutter thoughts of regicide. One almost has to pity Newt. His own party pilloried him last year for stubbornly leading them off the budgetary cliff and nearly losing control of Congress. Now, realizing his errors, Gingrich has adopted a shrewder half-a-loaf tactic. And all he gets is grief. "Rather than folding, some members ought to exercise leadership, drive a message and fight for principle," scolded Republican Congressman David McIntosh. Fight for principle! Why didn't anybody ever think of that before? •

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NOTEBOOK

BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS: Every so often, when it is feeling particularly benevolent, *The New York Times* takes somebody it likes out for a meal and a softball interview. It is always a famous person, or at least a powerful or eminently successful one. (The *Times* likes the masses fine, but not, for God's sake, to the point of eating with them.) Soon thereafter, an account of the dining and chatting appears in the *Times* under the heading "At Lunch With," or "At Breakfast With," or something of the sort. "At Lunch With" is almost always positive. It is a blessing, one of those ways in which the *Times*, in its role as the voice of the establishment, recognizes and celebrates those individuals whose achievements are so impressive that they deserve a nice write-up before they die. Last week, the *Times* took Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. to breakfast. Cochran, reporter Jan Hoffmann gushed, is "the most famous lawyer in America," and he is also a snappy dresser ("...he wore a most un-New York double-breasted mauve suit with a lavender pocket handkerchief and an enameled lapel pin of a rose"). He "rents a two-bedroom apartment on the 47th floor of a West 57th Street power palace," and he has a public relations agent and new clients and a TV gig and lots of money. But Cochran is also a man with a grievance. His grievance is that, for some odd reason, people don't like him. His public relations agent is working on this, says the *Times*, "filling his calendar with social-conscience appearances at public schools." And Cochran told the *Times* that he wants to move beyond "a certain double homicide in Brentwood." He can hope. The *Times* notwithstanding, Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. is one of those few people whom it is the proper business of a decent society to absolutely scorn. He is resented not because he is black or rich or famous. He is resented because he enabled a rich man to get away with bloody murder, and he did this by resorting to wild untruths and by the lowest and coarsest exploitation of racial hostility. In doing so he significantly helped to polarize whites and blacks in this country, and he has the gall to both preach and laugh about it. And the *Times* joins him in the performance. Next week in the paper of record: "Afternoon Tea With Tim McVeigh."

FIT FOR A KING: The politics of moral grandeur? The world is not exactly surfeited with it. But when you see it, you know why it matters. We saw it last week, when the king of Jordan, grieved by the murder of seven Israeli girls by a Jordanian soldier, and concerned that a strongly worded letter that he had sent to Benjamin Netanyahu might have contributed to the climate in which such an atrocity could occur, went to Israel and visited the seven Israeli families in seven houses of mourning and sank to his knees before their stunned and sorrowful parents to ask forgiveness. "I feel that I've lost a child," Hussein told a father in Beit Shemesh, in the Galilee. "I hope that you will consider me a brother and a member of the family." Hussein was accompanied by his son and his daughter, and by Netanyahu—who, we must note, has not yet visited Palestinians in their bereavement to establish that this conflict has not destroyed the rudiments of humaneness. Last week we criticized the king's letter, and it still strikes us as in part ill-judged; but we are now sure (as we should have been after his eulogy at Yitzhak Rabin's funeral) that he is a man with a touch of sublimity, and all the harsh realities of his region have not robbed him of it. We wonder how the extraordinary spectacle of the king on his knees was received in the Arab capitals and the Arab papers. We have not yet heard that they were moved.

AL'S IN CHARGE: In their controversial new book, *The Coming Conflict with China*, reviewed in this issue, Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro attack former government officials such as Alexander M. Haig Jr. for selling their prestige to American companies that hope to influence U.S. policy toward China. On March 6, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that Munro was fired from the Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute—on whose board of trustees Haig sits and whose president, Harvey Sicherman, is a former assistant to Haig. Sicherman claims that "differences had developed over the past year and a half with respect to management and the philosophy and the direction of the institute," but the episode suggests that Munro may have become a victim of the very phenomenon he describes in his book: the new China lobby.

FASTER PUSSYCAT, KILL KILL KILL: Dan Burton swears he's a new man, that he can be trusted to run the House committee investigating the Clinton fund-raising scandals soberly and judiciously. "I don't think I have to be a pit bull to do this," the Indiana congressman explained to *The New York Times*, and the Gray Lady swooned; the article described him as "affable," "amiable." The time he propped up a fake Vince Foster head in his backyard and shot it—to see how far the sound would travel—is now merely a footnote, a tick of his "quirky" and "pesky" past. But his past tendencies, we fear, may not be entirely past. While all the attention goes to Fred Thompson's Senate committee, Burton has sneakily requested permission to do things Thompson probably hasn't dreamed of. Burton requested $12 million for his committee, half of which will go to the investigation, plus an almost $8 million reserve fund. (Thompson's most ambitious request was for $6.5 million.) The span of Burton's thirty-two subpoena requests is oceanic: everyone who was in the White House residence for the past four years and the DNC's entire donor file. Worse, he's asked for the power to release confidential documents without a committee vote (Thompson doesn't want to release them at all). The details of Burton's budget give you a sense of the kind of Blofeld operation he envisions: $100,000 for foreign language experts, $4,000 for cellular phones and, in perhaps the most telling sign of dispersed paranoia, $1,750 for a shredder. •

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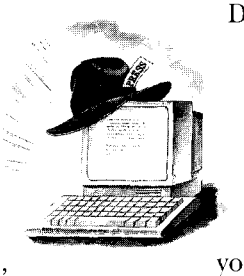
TIRANA DISPATCH

FAVORITE SON

By Stacy Sullivan

Bashkim Fino, the young former mayor of Gjirokaster, watched wearily from his home a few weeks ago as armed insurgents took control of his city. The rebels, seeking the resignation of Albania's reviled president, Sali Berisha, seized control of a military barrack stocked with hundreds of automatic rifles, hand grenades, machine guns and over sixty tanks. They marauded through town, looting and burning stores and firing blindly into the air. This wasn't one of the problems of municipal governance about which Fino had been instructed when he attended a U.S.-sponsored program for overseas mayors in Scottsdale, Arizona, last year.

But in politics you never know when your break will come. And, as Fino quivered in his home, he got word that he was to travel to the capital at once. His Socialist Party, invited by a desperate Berisha into a "Government of Reconciliation," had chosen him as Albania's new prime minister. Dutifully, the obscure former mayor—and also, by reputation, small-time cigarette smuggler—trekked off to save his country from anarchy.



Upon assuming his new job, Fino appealed to Albania's insurgents to lay down their arms, but the insurgents were too busy shooting up everything, and nothing, to pay attention. Two days after his arrival, government soldiers abandoned three state armories on the outskirts of Tirana to rebels. Thousands of people—some as young as 8 years old—toted off automatic rifles, hand grenades and ammunition. Meanwhile, at the Tirana prison, guards abandoned their posts, freeing both political prisoners and violent criminals. One of the escapees was Fatos Nano, the leader of the Socialist Party who is both Berisha's greatest political threat and Fino's party boss. Overnight, what was left of order in the capital vanished, as a now remarkably well-armed citizenry competed in a vast looting spree, emptying shops, warehouses and bakeries.

Suddenly, Fino's brand-new administration controlled only the 200 square meters surrounding the government buildings in the city center. The rest of the country had fallen to armed rebels. Desperate to regain control, Fino and Berisha appealed to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union for military intervention. They also armed volunteers who were willing to try to put down the rebellion, but the volunteers themselves began fighting—divided between supporters of Berisha and Fino's Socialist superior Fatos Nano. By the time eleven European Union advisers arrived on March 17 to advise the new government on how to handle the crisis, things had settled down, but, in the capital, people spoke of this as a "dreadful calm" and said they feared even greater violence in the weeks to come.

This was not the way it was supposed to go. Berisha, after all, was blessed by the West as the man who would keep Albania stable. Back in 1991, before the war in Bosnia, Western governments feared it was the Yugoslav autonomous region of Kosovo, not Bosnia, that would erupt. Some 2 million Albanians in Kosovo, who grew up believing that the isolated Socialist Republic of Albania was paradise, were hungry to break free from their Serbian "oppressors" and link up with their brethren in the motherland. Eager to avoid the bloodshed that any Kosovian break from Serbia would produce, the West, particularly the U.S., searched for an Albanian leader they could rely on to extinguish the flames of nationalism. Berisha, a heart surgeon and former Communist Party official from a mountainous village in the north, headed the newly established Democratic Party. In his 1992 run for Albania's presidency, Berisha assured the Americans that he would work to quell nationalist sentiment in Kosovo and Macedonia, which also boasts a significant percentage of Albanians. In exchange, the U.S. gave him full support.

Former American Ambassador to Albania William Ryerson actively campaigned for the young president-elect, standing next to him at campaign rallies and lending credence to the naïve belief of Albania's electorate that ties with America would bring Albania into the modern world. The National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute supplied computers, cars and election materials to the Democratic Party. After Berisha cruised to victory, the U.S. began a steady stream of aid to the impoverished Balkan nation—with roughly $60 million pledged for 1997 alone, which figures out to roughly $17 to each of Albania's 3.4 million inhabitants.

All was well until Berisha began employing the police tactics he learned under the Communist regime of the late Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha. America's man in Albania lost little time in assuming control of Albania's secret police force, known as Shik, and packing it with men from Tropoja, Berisha's hometown. Berisha's secret police imprisoned, harassed and beat his political opponents and critics in the press.

Concerned only that Berisha was not inflaming latent nationalism in Kosovo, the U.S. and the Europeans withheld their criticism. "Berisha interpreted the silence as a green light to abandon democratic institutions and consolidate power," said Fred Abrahams, a consultant for Human Rights Watch. "He just kept pushing the envelope to see how far he could go." The envelope finally broke after the parliamentary elections in May 1996,

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when the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe presented well-documented evidence of election fraud. Monitors found pre-stuffed ballot boxes with Democratic Party candidates marked off in identical pen strokes, and opposition politicians reported being beaten and threatened in the days preceding the elections.

The U.S. refused to recognize the new Albanian parliament, which has been boycotted since its inception by the few Socialists who managed to win seats despite the widespread fraud. But it was too late. Berisha had gutted Albania's fledgling democratic institutions and surrounded himself with hard-line "yes-men."

And if Albania's politics were bad, its economics were worse. The country's only real sources of revenue were sanctions-busting, drug-smuggling and arms-running, the proceeds of which filtered into a string of immensely popular pyramid schemes. The schemes, which allowed Albanians to believe they were reaping the fruits of capitalism, took in some 800,000 people, the equivalent of one person per family. The pyramids made Albania look like a country becoming richer instead of what it was, a country robbing itself. Although it produced next to nothing, Albania on paper was roaring along with an impressive growth rate of 9 percent per year. "Things looked so good in Albania that we didn't think we needed to have advisers in any of the government ministries," said John King, the International Monetary Fund's representative in Tirana. In 1992, Tirana boasted two restaurants; this winter it had 6,000. "It was like some kind of paradise," said Blendi Fevziu, an Albanian journalist. "You didn't have to do anything but keep your mouth shut, and wait for your pyramid payment to be disbursed."

American and European officials, as well as monitors at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, suspected what was coming and privately warned the Albanian government of the dangers of pyramid schemes. But, officially, they said nothing. Not until November, after the Democratic Party stole a fresh round of local elections, did international officials go public with their warnings. The warnings backfired. To counteract them, the pyramid builders pushed rates of return still higher, hastening the inevitable collapse. When the fall came, it shattered not only Albanian dreams of easy money, but Western illusions that it could base regional peace upon petty tyranny and fake capitalism.

With Albania now awash with guns, the prospect of instability across the border in Macedonia and Kosovo is greater than ever. The U.S. and Europe, having waited far too long to act, must now hope that the ingenue Fino, the hated Berisha, their ragtag police force and eleven men in white suits from the European Union can convince an enraged and desperate population to lay down their arms and accept that they will never get their stolen money back. As one local political analyst put it: "The Europeans and the Americans cooked this dirty dish here, and now they have to live with it. It's the price they have to pay for relying on a dictator to bring about stability."

STACY SULLIVAN is a correspondent in *Newsweek*'s Balkans bureau.

The KGB convicts the Rosenbergs.

FINAL VERDICT

By Ronald Radosh

The National Security Council's June 1995 release of the Venona files ("The Venona Files," TNR, August 7, 1995) offered most observers all the proof they needed that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg participated in a major Soviet espionage operation. The release of these top secret Soviet codes did not, however, satisfy the Rosenbergs' most die-hard defenders. The couple's sons, Michael and Robert Meeropol, released a statement to the press suggesting that the Rosenbergs' names had been entered by the CIA and National Security Agency decades later, and that the codes themselves were probably forgeries. For others on the left, who for so many years had argued that the Rosenbergs were victims of a government frame-up, it was naturally hard to now admit that their long years of campaigning for vindication had been misguided.

And the left had some slight hope to cling to. Although the Venona documents were produced by the Soviet government (they were encoded KGB files broken by American cryptanalysts), the fall of the Soviet Union had not by that time produced any documentation from the KGB itself. Nor had former KGB agents shared what they knew of the Rosenbergs. Indeed, Anatoli Yatskov (a.k.a. Yakovlev), the head of the KGB in New York during the years the Rosenbergs were active, shortly before his death told Michael Dobbs of *The Washington Post* that he had never even met the Rosenbergs. Now, finally, the KGB has spoken—and the case against the Rosenbergs must be considered closed: they were guilty as charged, of conspiring to spy for the Soviet Union.

In a televised interview to be aired by the Discovery Channel on March 23 at 10 p.m., EST ("The Rosenberg File: Case Closed"), the former KGB colonel Aleksander Feklisov, the spymaster who handled the Rosenberg case, says he recruited Julius Rosenberg to spy for the Soviet Union in 1943, that he had fifty meetings with Rosenberg, that Rosenberg gave him valuable military information, and that Ethel Rosenberg was aware of her husband's spying but did not participate in intelligence work. "Julius and Ethel are heroes, real heroes," Feklisov told the press. "I don't want to take this story to my grave."

Feklisov, a career KGB officer, began his field career undercover as a public relations officer in the New York consulate. In the early 1940s, Feklisov (using the cover name "Alexander Fomin" in the U.S. and the code name "Kalistrat" in dealing with Moscow) worked directly

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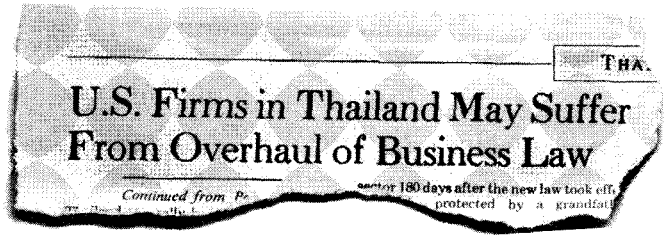

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under Anatoli Yatskov, and in those years directly handled the cadre of American spies that the KGB recruited and ran in New York. It was in this capacity that he signed up Julius Rosenberg and others as agents.

Defenders of the Rosenbergs may contend that Feklisov's stunning on-camera confession is a concoction, and they may convince the remaining few who want to be convinced that this is so. We have, the defenders will say, only Feklisov's word, since he does not offer actual documents from the KGB archives—documents he was refused permission to receive. And, given the sorry state of the Russian pension system after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is not entirely unreasonable to think that former KGB agents might say anything in exchange for dollars from American television networks.

Early indications are that this argument will be the main line of what is left of the Rosenberg defense; it is already being suggested by Morton Sobell, the Rosenbergs' codefendant, that Feklisov made up a story to fit what is known about the case from past revelations, including the Venona papers. But this argument cannot stand, because Feklisov spoke to the producers of "The Rosenberg File" *before* the July 1995 Venona release. Moreover, there is a good deal of evidence to confirm what Feklisov says—and that evidence comes from none other than Julius Rosenberg. Those familiar with the Rosenberg case will recall that an FBI informer, who shared a cell with Julius while he awaited trial at the New York Federal House of Detention ("The Tombs") reported regularly to the bureau about his conversations with Rosenberg. This man, Jerome Eugene Tartakow, told the FBI the following on March 20, 1951: "According to ROSENBERG, he has never known or met YAKOVLEV. He claims that in reality, he furnished information to two Russians named ALEX and HENRY, instead of to YAKOVLEV as contended." The name "Alex" obviously refers to Feklisov, who used the code name Alexander Fomin with Julius, and "Henry" refers to the KGB agent named Semon "Sam" Semenov, who served as American courier Harry Gold's control and who served in the KGB office the same years as Feklisov.

Further confirmation comes from the Venona files. When the Venona documents were released, one of the most cited and humorous revelations was that the KGB had given Julius the code name "Liberal." In his interview Feklisov says, "we had a nickname for Julius.... It was Libi ... short of Liberal." This rebuts the claim that the code names were added at a later date by the NSA code-breakers.

Feklisov's detailed account makes it clear that the secrets Rosenberg stole were of great value to the Soviets. Feklisov says that Rosenberg recruited Sobell, whose job was to obtain data on radar and sonar. He also says that Rosenberg stole plans from the Emerson Corporation for the so-called "friend and foe" device, which distinguished allied from enemy aircraft. These accomplishments paled next to Julius's major achievement: the theft of a proximity fuse assembled in its entirety. In Feklisov's and others' estimation, possession of the proximity fuse "increases the possibility to shoot down enemy planes maybe ten ... twenty times." Feklisov says that it was the proximity fuse that was used to shoot down the U-2 piloted by Major Francis Gary Powers, putting an end to the scheduled 1960 summit conference between Eisenhower and Khrushchev.

On only two points does Feklisov tend to exonerate rather than implicate. The first is the claim that Ethel Rosenberg did no spying. This, however, is not new or particularly controversial. Feklisov's testimony about Ethel confirms what Sol Stem and I first argued in these pages in 1979: that Ethel was indicted, tried and condemned to death for one purpose alone—to pressure her husband to testify about others in his ring. But Feklisov does corroborate the information in the Venona files that reveal Ethel was fully aware of her husband's work and was an accessory to his activities.

The second point tending toward exoneration—and the point *The New York Times* inexplicably chose to make the focus of its brief, buried story of Feklisov's revelations—is the claim that the atomic data the Soviets obtained from Julius Rosenberg through his brother-in-law David Greenglass was relatively worthless, that Klaus Fuchs's data "was thousands of times more valuable" to them than Greenglass's sketches. But this point is open to doubt. It is true that Fuchs, Theodore A. Hall and the as yet unidentified spy known as "Perseus" or "Pers" eventually gave the Soviets the most sophisticated top-level information. But Feklisov is not a reliable judge of whether Greenglass's sketches were of importance.

In his 1996 book, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, Richard Rhodes was able, using Soviet scientific sources, to coordinate the dates of the Greenglass information with that data received in Russia by Soviet physicist Igor Kurchatov. Rhodes concludes: "Greenglass's information on implosion, however limited, was the first news the Soviets had of the radical new approach." Moreover, Rhodes adds that Greenglass's sketch of a cylindrical implosion lens with four-point detonation, based on Walter Koski's work at Los Alamos (in which Greenglass participated), served as independent confirmation of the data Fuchs would later pass.

The Feklisov testimony finally brings debate on the Rosenbergs to an end. Controversy on the meaning of their work for Soviet espionage will no doubt continue. Some of their supporters will develop the post hoc argument that the Rosenbergs did no wrong because the Soviets were wrongfully deprived of American scientific expertise. But that will be a new argument; not the one made by Rosenberg defenders over the past forty years. They always claimed that the couple were innocent victims of a monstrous government frame-up carried out to silence opposition to the Truman administration's cold war plans. This is a claim that has been for years implausible to argue. It is now impossible.

RONALD RADOSH is coauthor with Joyce Milton of *The Rosenberg File*, second edition (Yale University Press).

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Why congressmen are never in Washington.

CAPITOL FLIGHT

By Jennifer Bradley

The Congressional Directory says that Mark Sanford is a congressman, representing the citizens of the First District of South Carolina. But Sanford prefers to think of himself in slightly different terms: he is a citizen-congressman. "My belief is that the Founding Fathers wanted us to come up here, make a difference and go home," he says. "Given where I'm coming from, I have a belief that you want to stay immersed in what folks at home are thinking." Sanford, one of the Republican freshmen of 1994, has yet to rent an apartment in Washington. He sleeps on a futon in his office, then dashes home every week to Charleston, leaving late on Thursday or early on Friday. He says that the mere act of being home—out of Washington and in the company of his constituents—makes him a better congressman: "There is a fair amount of value found in having to go get a thing of milk on Friday evening because there wasn't any, and running into somebody," somebody who will give him an on-the-spot job evaluation.

Sanford is a courtly man, more self-effacing than many of his colleagues. His belief in the citizen-Congress is genuine. And it is widely shared. In 1994, Republicans overthrew the Democratic majority on Capitol Hill by running as anti-Congress outsiders. Their election has changed the culture of the Hill. The term limits amendment to the Constitution, destined to be brought to the floor every year the GOP stays in power, is only one manifestation of this change. Gone are the days when congressmen boasted of their seniority and their hard-won knowledge of the ways of the Capitol. Nowadays, to hear the members talk, every one is a Cincinnatus, who painfully and regretfully leaves his real work at home to do his patriotic duty in wretched Washington.

At the root of the citizen-Congress myth is the notion that government is not a full-time job, that legislating is not so difficult a task that it requires constant attention. As Sanford once said of governing, "It's not like we're dealing with brain surgery." To the more extreme devotees of this populist agenda, time spent in Washington is not merely unnecessary but dangerous. The District is Babylon; the Beltway, the road to perdition. Washington corrupts and deforms, and the more time spent in the capital, the worse the damage.

This notion has its electoral charm. But it is a bad way to think about representative government; and it is creating a new kind of do-nothing Congress. Every week, on Thursday evening or Friday morning, more than half the members of the House abandon Washington, and its pernicious climate of government professionalism, and head home. They spend four cleansing, clarifying days with "real Americans" in their districts and return, reluctantly, to Washington as late as Monday night or Tuesday morning. To facilitate this, the House schedule is arranged so that little or no official business transpires on Mondays or Fridays. Most of their constituents may not know it, but these members have shoehorned the work of governing into three harried, tense, twelve-hour days. And that's during the regular session. Members also have district work periods, when they're home for a week or more at a time. The House rarely goes more than six weeks without a recess.

The truncated schedule was not invented in 1994, but in the 1960s, and not by Republicans, but by Democrats who wanted to encourage more responsive (and electorally secure) members. In the years since, what started out as a compromise between governing and representing has become a commandment of congressional faith.

The result is a Congress that doesn't function properly because it simply isn't there often enough. Lawmaking may not be brain surgery, but it's not a no-brainer, either. It requires not merely representatives but legislators—people who spend enough time on the Hill to learn the substance and form of lawmaking. "We're the ones who write the budget each year for $1.7 trillion," says Anthony Beilenson, a California Democrat who retired in January after twenty years in the House. "In the past we had a much larger proportion of members than we do now who physically and mentally spent a decent proportion of their time doing legislative work, and that means mainly going to committee hearings...." Now, he laments, there are "not 100 members out of 435 who are serious legislators." Budget cutting, he says, especially "needs a lot of members who, because they've spent a lot of time [here], understand where money can be wisely spent and other programs and areas where spending of money is not as useful.... You can't figure it out if you're flying back home...."

Even Republican David Dreier, who goes home almost every weekend because, as he says, "I prefer living in California to living in Washington, D.C.," speaks of the importance of "maintaining the deliberative nature of this institution." Constituent views "should not be the sole determinant," he says. "I'm not merely echoing whatever I hear.... It's clearly part of the mix, [but] not the sole determinant." True. The other determinant is supposed to be what Dreier thinks is right. And what is right is supposed to be arrived at through deliberation—through conversation with other members. This process depends on familiarity, trust and respect—qualities that accrue through conversations in the elevator, chance meetings in the cafeteria and just being around each other. In the new citizen-Congress, this is disappearing. Many long-serving members link the partisan sniping that has characterized the last Congress to the ignorance that so many members have of

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one another. So tenuous are some of the personal bonds in the House that members spent the weekend of March 7 at a civility retreat in Hershey, Pennsylvania, just trying to get to know one another well enough to stop shouting at each other. "Part of our problem today," said Florida Republican Tilly Fowler at a news conference about the retreat, "is most of us go home every weekend, and we don't get a chance to know each other."

Spending time at the office doesn't just breed courtesy, it helps to produce good laws. Modern government is complicated. Members of Congress are called on to vote for national highway programs, for the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act (which is—well, that's the point: they have to know what it is) and a hundred other bills. These are not issues to which constituents have all the answers. Mark Sanford thinks that members should "make [laws] simple enough so that the common man understands them." This sounds nice, but it means nothing, or worse than nothing: it means half-baked, poll-driven, faux-populist laws.

There is, finally, the problem of intellectual fraud. The rush to get back to "real Americans" betrays a serious confusion between living with people and living like them. Despite their good intentions, Sanford and his commuter colleagues don't live like most of their constituents. Their local addresses are conceits, because they don't really live anywhere. And this, arguably, makes them less in touch with the needs of "real people" than if they simply moved to Washington and brought their families with them. The new citizen-congressmen, sleeping on their futons and in their group homes on Capitol Hill, are divorcing themselves from the way most of their constituents live. "With no family in town, that lends itself to the 'Well, why not have late night sessions?' attitude, and all of the fraying nerves that come with that," says Colorado Democrat David Skaggs. "It means that most members do not have the normal experience of going home and having dinner with a spouse and kids that reminds us of a greater reality. It's impossible to quantify, but I know that just the general mind-set and demeanor of members would be different if they were going home at night to their families. It seems to me that's a much more normal and normalizing [life] than the pretense [of] leaving family out in the home district."

The anti-professionalists love to quote America's founders to bolster their distrust of government and feed their strangely flattering self-hatred. But George Washington said this in his farewell address: "You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint counsels and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings and successes." The commonality of which Washington spoke, the space in which the people's representatives meet and debate and fight and legislate, is not an abstract or metaphorical place. It is a real, particular place, and it's called Washington, D.C.

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The myth of Swiss neutrality.

ACCOUNTING DEVICE

By Jonathan Mahler

An engraved timepiece was recently on display in the "Tokens and Treasures" exhibit at the National Archives. It's a gold pocket watch presented to President Truman by the citizens of Geneva in 1946. An accompanying description of the watch read: "Though neutral during World War II, Switzerland favored the Allied cause." Only a year ago, this claim would not have rated a second glance. But now, after countless revelations about Swiss venality in the face of the German genocide, the irony is, well, rich. What began as a scrappy effort by Jewish survivors and their heirs to recover assets deposited in Swiss bank accounts before World War II has evolved into an unexpected confrontation with history for a tiny nation comfortably wrapped in its own protective wartime mythology for fifty years.

The realization that the Holocaust was not just about murder but about looting, pillaging and state enrichment is forcing a re-examination of the very notion of neutrality, a term that suddenly seems inadequate, even obstructive. In the wake of the Swiss revelations, the other World War II neutrals—Spain, Portugal and Sweden—are all investigating their respective dealings with the Nazis. Recently declassified documents suggest that Spain may still be holding most of the $100 million

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(roughly $1 billion today) in Nazi gold that it received over the course of the war; that Portugal, which traded tungsten, a chemical used to manufacture explosives, with the Nazis, cleared about $139 million in German gold during the war; and that even Sweden, home of Raoul Wallenberg, provided loans to Hitler's Reich.

In time, these countries too may be targeted by the World Jewish Congress and Senator Alfonse D'Amato, the leaders of the drive to compensate Holocaust victims for lost assets stored in Switzerland during the war. How they will respond to pressure for a financial accounting remains to be seen, but the more salient question is whether they will shoulder a moral accounting. If the Swiss story is any indication, there is little cause for optimism. For, despite all the American Jewish backslapping occasioned by the Swiss government's recent move to establish a multibillion-dollar trust fund for all victims of catastrophe and poverty, Switzerland is no closer to assuming responsibility for its behavior during the war than it was before the disclosures about stolen Jewish gold first started grabbing headlines last spring.

The pressing question facing the writers of Swiss mythology in the aftermath of World War II was how their nation—unlike other small countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Denmark—had escaped invasion. The answer lay in a self-congratulatory tale of canny diplomacy and a strong army. The descendants of the crossbow-wielding William Tell, their brave sentries sprinkled across snowcapped mountains, had made the price of Nazi invasion too high. The Swiss remembered their country as an island of righteousness, liberty and humanitarianism in a sea of barbarism and intolerance. The Switzerland of *The Sound of Music* comes to mind, a sort of World War II Promised Land that beckoned across the Alps to Julie Andrews.

The Swiss peddled this honorable tale, and the world largely bought it. In a letter to Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden near the close of the war, no less than Winston Churchill wrote, "Of all the neutrals, Switzerland has the greatest right to distinction. She has been the sole international force linking the hideously sundered nations and ourselves. What does it matter whether she has been able to give us the commercial advantages we desire or has given too many to the Germans, to keep herself alive? She has been a democratic state, standing for freedom in self-defence among her mountains, and in thought, in spite of race, largely on our side."

Now it emerges that it was not Switzerland's military that ensured its survival, but its willingness—if not eagerness—to bankroll the Germans. Swiss bankers, businessmen and government officials sold machine tools, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, electrical power and even small arms to the Nazis. The Swiss also bought plundered gold and looted artwork from the Reich through the duration of the war, long after the Allies had persuaded other neutrals to stop. Much of the gold came from the central banks of the various occupied countries, but some of it was "victim gold"—watches, silverware, even gold fillings—stolen from Jews and other targets of the Nazi genocide. The Swiss, it turns out, made good neighbors to the Germans because they were good fences. In response to these revelations, an increasingly uncomfortable Swiss National Bank agreed last month that it would finance a $4.7 billion "Solidarity" fund for victims of oppression. The move, deemed a sign of Switzerland's new willingness to confront its past, earned plaudits from American politicians, Jewish leaders and many editorial writers. But upon closer inspection the humanitarian fund offers little evidence of such a willingness. Three of seven Swiss cabinet members argued against the creation of the fund. And Christoph Blocher, a right-wing member of parliament who was behind the 1992 referendum that blocked the country's membership in the European Union, sputtered that the federal council "has lost its head." Only days before the announcement of the fund's creation, Blocher told some 1,000 enthusiastic attendees at a rally in Zurich that Switzerland had no reason to apologize for doing business with Nazi Germany, that the Swiss should, in fact, be proud of their history in World War II, and that "the Jews are only interested in money."

In December, the outgoing president of Switzerland, Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, accused the World Jewish Congress of "blackmail and extortion." A January cartoon in a daily newspaper depicted the seven Swiss cabinet ministers as ultra-Orthodox Jews, praying at a "Holy Wall" constructed from gold bars. A spokesman for the Swiss Bank Corporation, which contributed to a separate, private fund—under the threat of a boycott in New York—told *The New York Times* that it was not a confession. "We are not saying we are guilty," he said. "We are not saying we collaborated."

Such attitudes are reminiscent of the Swiss approach to the 1946 Washington Agreement, the anemic postwar treaty that allowed Bern to keep untold quantities of German booty. It was under this pact that the Allied governments agreed to lift their economic blockade against Switzerland. In exchange, the Swiss made a token one-time payment to the Allies of a paltry 250 million Swiss francs. To ensure the gesture wasn't misconstrued as an admission of guilt, the agreement referred to the Swiss contribution as voluntary. The text of the 1946 treaty, moreover, noted that the Swiss government had been "unable to recognize the legal basis of the claims," but was nevertheless happy to "contribute its share to the pacification and reconstruction of Europe."

Does the Solidarity fund represent a change in attitude? In his address announcing the establishment of the foundation, Swiss President Arnold Koller did grudgingly allow that his country's recipe for survival during the war included a policy of "adjustment" as well as "resistance," and he said that the issue of whether all the methods employed to maintain Swiss independence were "legitimate and acceptable" will be answered by the commission now investigating the matter. "It is possible," he acknowledged, "that the committee of historians will draw conclusions also in the field of private economic relations as well as of the gold commerce handled by the

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National Bank, and maybe it will incriminate the responsible people."

But the responsible people and institutions have already been exposed. Countless documents have been declassified that prove that the Swiss National Bank was Hitler's favorite trading partner during the war. The Swiss National Bank has admitted to accepting 1.6 billion Swiss francs worth of Nazi gold from the Reichsbank between September 1939 and May 1945. After 1942, Switzerland was the only neutral still willing to exchange Nazi gold for currency. Walther Funk, president of the Reichsbank during the war, has testified that Germany wouldn't have made it for more than two months during the height of the war without the help of the Swiss National Bank. As for Swiss private banks, a report written by two leading Swiss historians and commissioned by none other than the Swiss government itself reveals how the Swiss banks, normally so punctilious in protecting the assets of even the most unsavory clients, turned their backs on their Jewish depositors. Intended to refute charges that Switzerland used the assets of murdered Jews in a 1949 trade deal with Poland, the document instead shows that Swiss bankers went so far as to demand death certificates from family members of depositors killed in the Nazi genocide.

And it is also hard not to be cynical about the timing of President Koller's much ballyhooed Solidarity fund. The proposal comes only weeks before President Clinton's special envoy on the issue, Stuart Eizenstat, is expected to release an incriminating report detailing the quantity of looted Nazi gold held in Switzerland during the war. What's more, the fund will be established with earnings from the investment of a portion of the gains realized as a result of a long-overdue revaluation of Swiss gold reserves, which are currently carried at about one-third of today's gold prices. Simply put, the fund will give Switzerland an excuse to dip into its most valuable resource—26,000 tons of gold, the third largest stash in the world.

The most glaring proof that Switzerland has not come to terms with its past is the case of Christoph Meili, the 28-year-old Zurich security guard who turned in his employer, the Union Bank of Switzerland, for shredding historical documents. For this act of courage, Meili was fired and is now being investigated for violating bank secrecy laws. His case echoes that of Paul Grueninger, a Swiss police chief in the border canton of St. Gallen during the war. Grueninger was fired in 1939 for disobeying the Swiss policy of turning away Jewish refugees; he lost his pension and lived the rest of his life in poverty. Attempts to clear him, beginning as far back as 1968, were blocked by the Swiss government. It was not until 1995 that he was posthumously rehabilitated and his pension restored for his family.

Until the Swiss abandon the neutrality myth and begin asking themselves if they behaved morally during and after the war, people like Grueninger won't be recognized as heroes. And, until then, the country that is perhaps best known for making such reliable watches—including the one presented to Truman—will remain frozen in time. •

Why Congress still flouts its own rules.

THE JUNGLE

By Stephen Glass

Mary remembers a conversation she had with her husband over breakfast on January 5, 1995. For the past three months the couple had been bickering about everything from laundry to personal hygiene to sex. That morning, she had even recommended they eat at a diner so they wouldn't argue about the eggs being overcooked. "The fighting never, never stopped. It all came down to us wanting to have kids," Mary says in a teary, halting voice. "But with my schedule there was no way." A gregarious woman in her mid-30s, Mary has worked for Democrats on Capitol Hill for most of her adult life. Although she never moved beyond clerical jobs, she rarely boarded the Metro to go home before 8 p.m. and often arrived at work before 7 a.m., even on Saturdays. "With this schedule, we couldn't have children," she says. "I'd never be home to take care of them."

But that morning, Mary's husband read that the newly elected Republican House had passed a bill mandating that Congress live under the same laws as everyone else. Mary's husband figured the new law meant Mary would either be sent home after forty hours or be paid so much overtime he could quit his job. "This means we can have kids," he said.

It hasn't worked out that way. Since New Year's, Mary has averaged two *more* hours a week than she did in 1994—and she hasn't received a dime in overtime. "For-

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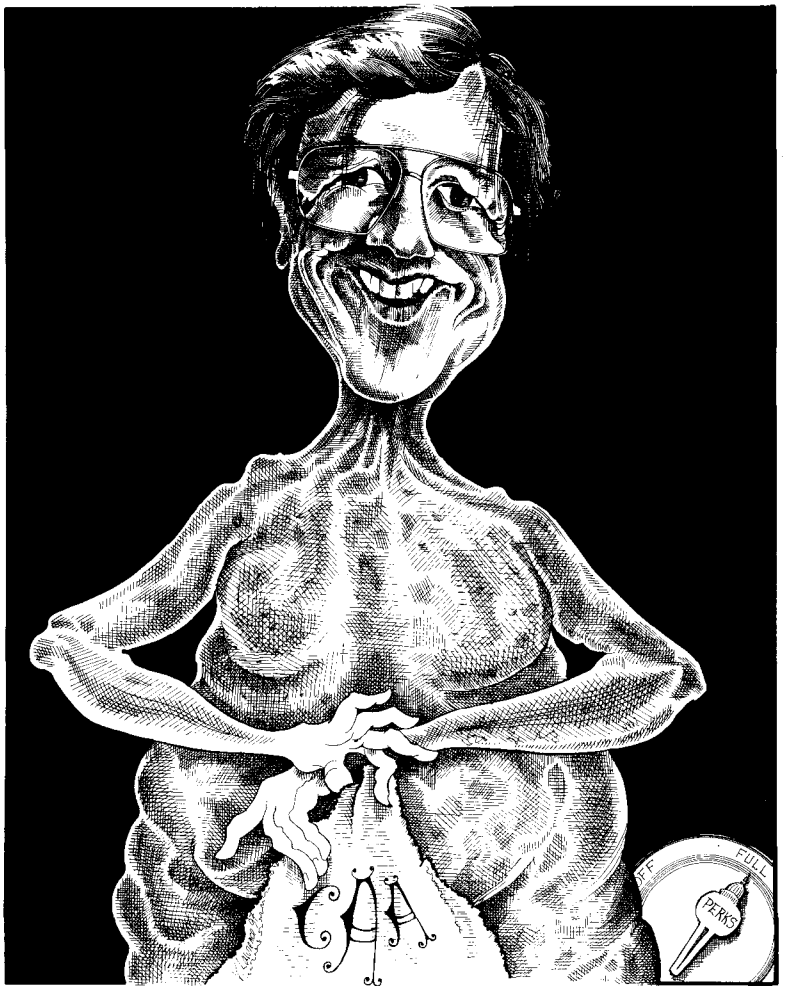
get all the ballyhoo. Congress still doesn't live under its own laws," she says.

The Congressional Accountability Act, or CAA, was the primal bill of the Republican revolution of 1994, offered up by the newly elected Speaker Newt Gingrich on the heady first day of the 104th Congress. The act applied to Congress eleven labor laws that the private sector had followed for years, including workers' rights to unionize, earn overtime and sue for discrimination. The measure passed unanimously after only twenty minutes of debate—the quickest passage of a peacetime bill since 1933—and President Clinton promptly signed it into law. In the days since then, as the other populist tenets of the Contract with America—like the Balanced Budget Amendment—failed, the passage of the Congressional Accountability Act has become one of the Republican Congress's proudest boasts. If the 104th Congress didn't do all it said it would, at least it put Congress under its own laws.

It would be worth bragging about if it were true. But the CAA has done almost nothing to ensure that members of Congress live under the laws they impose, especially labor laws. While many staffers say they work just as many hours as in the past, few report receiving any overtime pay. No congressman has been hauled into court. And it is still illegal for staffers to unionize.



BILL THOMAS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

How did this happen? First of all, Congress designed it that way. Buried deep in the statute—and virtually ignored by the press—are enormous loopholes that essentially gut the law. And what has not been accomplished by clever design has been accomplished by brute force. To enforce the Congressional Accountability Act, Congress established a Compliance Board composed of labor lawyers and charged with the authority to write regulations under the law and to adjudicate disputes. It also established a Compliance Office, which handles day-to-day administration of the act. Both entities were partially placed under the jurisdiction of the House Oversight Committee, which is chaired by California Congressman Bill Thomas. Since December 1995, Thomas has worked tirelessly to undermine the Congressional Accountability Act and to bully the Compliance Office out of enforcing it. Few lawmakers have opposed Thomas's battle because, unlike on nearly any other issue, Thomas's interest is every congressman's interest. If he loosens the grip of the CAA, it helps them all.

The two great loopholes in the law were built into the structure of the Compliance Office. Amid pages of jargon, Thomas & Co. wrote that the Compliance Office could only investigate and prosecute three of the eleven laws the act purports to cover. They are the Occupational Safety and Health Act, parts of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Chapter 71 of the U.S. Code, which gives workers the right to unionize. For the other eight laws, including those covering racial and sexual discrimination, the Compliance Office can only judge disputes that a staffer brings to them. This is completely different from the private sector, where the government—recognizing that many employees are too scared to sue their bosses—has empowered agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to investigate and prosecute violations.

The second loophole shrouded the Compliance Office's proceedings in secrecy and rigged the process so only the most determined staffer could sue his boss. If a congressional staffer alleges, say, racial discrimination, he is first required to meet with a counselor and talk about his problem. Then, if he is still unhappy, he must participate in mediation with his boss. Finally, if both sides still can't agree, the Compliance Office hosts a closed hearing, and the transcript is sealed. Only then can the staffer go to court.

But, even then, two other provisions of the Congressional Accountability Act shield lawmakers from punishment. First, Section 225(c) prohibits both the courts and the Compliance Office from slapping members of Congress with punitive damages. Unlike the way it works in the private sector, a victimized staffer can only recover back pay and compensatory damages. Moreover, Section 415(a) of the act says that taxpayers' money—

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rather than the congressman's money—will be used to pay for all guilty decisions or settlements. In fact, the penalty is not even assessed against the congressman's office budget. Instead, the CAA set up a new, limitless fund to pay for all judgments and settlements.

That's a lot of gutting, but it hasn't been enough for Chairman Thomas, who has waged a determined battle to block staffers from unionizing and from collecting overtime. Thomas is not acting without reason. Congress runs on vast amounts of unpaid overtime, with young, underpaid staffers routinely putting in twelve-hour days. According to a nonpartisan survey, a typical Hill caseworker works fifty-two hours a week. With overtime, at current pay scales, he or she would be earning $37,700 a year—a 45 percent pay raise.

Members of Congress operating on fixed budgets have a natural antipathy to the idea of doling out 45 percent raises. Thomas is there to see that they won't have to pay them. In a series of heated letters in early 1996, Thomas first demanded the Compliance Board shield members from lawsuits from overworked and underpaid staffers by picking which staffers could lawfully be exempted from overtime. But the office refused, pointing out that Congress, in its determination to make the office weak, had not given it advisory authority any more than it had given it prosecutorial authority.

Frustrated, Thomas demanded that a gag order be imposed on anyone who filed a claim against a member of Congress until it was resolved. Again, the Compliance Board refused. Thomas decided to make it clear who was boss.

In the late afternoon on December 15, 1995, Thomas held a closed-door meeting at his office. Attending were about ten people, including the Oversight Committee's ranking minority member, Vic Fazio; the Compliance Office's executive director, Ricky Silberman; the Compliance Board's chairman, Glen Nager; and several members of the committee's staff. According to three people at the meeting, Thomas again outlined his demands for a gag order and advisory opinions. Again, Nager and Silberman refused. After an hour of debate, during a lull in the talk, Thomas looked directly at Nager, according to two people in the room. Then, according to Silberman, Thomas said to the compliance officials: "It is my job to lessen the impact of this act. Your job is to help me do it.... If one charge is brought against a member of Congress, I will consider it my failure and yours."

The event was so remarkable that one witness wrote about it that night in a private diary: "Evening meeting over CAA erupted with Thomas scaring and intimidating R.S. and G.N. and others. He got so into it, spit started collecting on the corners of his mouth. He told them that it was his job to reduce the impact and threat of the CAA. He insisted that they give advisory opinions to avoid voters attacking Members. If even one charge, he threatened, is brought against a single Member it would be a failure. It was like watching a general, they knew their orders.... Thomas better watch out, that's almost breaking HE 7. He could get into trouble."

"HE 7" refers to the seventh chapter of the House ethics manual, which says congressmen cannot pressure agency decision-makers. Thomas did not return phone calls about the diary's content but, through an aide, denied bullying anyone.

In the months since that meeting, the House has passed a nonbinding resolution asking the Compliance Board to issue advisory opinions, but no one has acted on it. Instead, according to a March 1996 survey by *The Hill*, at least eleven lawmakers—including Thomas—have bypassed the overtime law by exempting their entire staff. The wholesale-exemptors maintain that everyone in their offices—even the receptionists—performs supervisory duties and therefore qualifies for exemption.

Running alongside the overtime debate is a byzantine and even bloodier battle over unionization. The Capitol Police were among the first to begin a union drive. But, every step of the way, the Police Board, which oversees the police force and whose members are appointed by the Republican majority, has worked to prevent the Hill's cops from the right to unionize given to them under the law passed by the Republican majority. At one point, the board claimed the entire police force, even those directing traffic, should be prohibited from unionizing due to national security. When the Compliance Office began to hold hearings, the Police Board sued it. A judge threw out the suit almost immediately. In early April, the cops will vote on whether to unionize.

The question of whether legislative employees can unionize is more complicated, but, again, it seems a simple issue for Thomas. Under the CAA, the Compliance Board drafts rules outlining which groups may unionize. These rules must then be approved by Thomas's committee and the entire Congress. In February, the Compliance Board ruled that legislative staffers can organize, just like all other congressional employees. An infuriated Thomas ordered the Compliance Board to rewrite the rules, but they properly refused, ruling that Thomas could accept the rules or reject them, but he couldn't force them to be remanded. On March 19, as this story went to press, Chairman Thomas was scheduled to convene the House Oversight Committee to investigate the matter of the Compliance Board's outrageous attempt to enforce the idea that Congress should live under the same laws as everyone else.

Meanwhile, Representative Chris Shays of Connecticut, the Congressional Accountability Act's architect, stands by the Compliance Office, saying they have "expertly" implemented the CAA: "I give them an A," he says.

What about Thomas?

"You want me to grade my colleagues?" Shays skirts. "Well, I give the House an A for passage."

No, what about Thomas?

"Umm ... well ... a B.... That's not such a bad grade." •

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The sleaze that dare not speak its name.

THE DIRTY HILL

By David Grann and Erika Niedowski

It was a select group that gathered in February at the historic Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach, Florida: 120 politicians and chief officers of major American businesses. They met in the Circle Dining Room, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, at 6:30 p.m. The limos and taxis were still out front when Newt Gingrich slipped in through a side door. Some moved to greet him; others chatted in a small circle with House Appropriations Chairman Bob Livingston. Waiters filled cocktail glasses as the guests admired the thirty-foot domed ceiling and its painted landscape murals of Renaissance Italy. For many of the 120, the private retreat for $100,000 donors was no more than an opportunity to mingle with other powerful men and women in a lovely, luxurious setting and to play golf on Florida's oldest eighteen-hole course. For others, though, it was a chance to talk politics with businessmen, or to talk business with politicians. There was Michael Wilson, of Florida Power & Light Co., who wanted congressional approval of a temporary storage site in Nevada for his company's mounting nuclear waste. At a nearby table, meticulously set with flowers and fine china, there was Thomas Collamore of Philip Morris, who was fighting President Clinton's proposal to regulate nicotine. Also nearby were Max Fisher, the Detroit financier, and Chesley Pruet, the Arkansas oil magnate. Many of them shared more than ideology with their hosts. Senator Frank Murkowski, chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, had introduced the very bill Wilson wanted passed. But, for now, conversation ceased as Gingrich started his keynote speech. The biannual gathering of the Republican Team 100 had just begun.

Members of Congress may not offer overnight stays at the White House, but they still promise their own mix of perks and politics. These fund-raising methods are usually legal, but they are almost always, and increasingly, unseemly. As the White House struggles with daily exposés, Congress has kept its virtuous distance, adopting an air of offended propriety. "We don't raise money on the floor of the Senate," says Murkowski. "We don't raise money in committee rooms. We don't raise money in Republican Caucus meetings." That's nice. If only it were true. The truth is that, in Congress, there is not one solicitor-in-chief—there are 535.

How shameless are they? In February, the man leading the House investigation into the Clinton fund-raising practices, Indiana Congressman Dan Burton, took a break from his do-good work and flew to Pebble Beach, California, to play golf in an AT&T-sponsored tournament with the company's chairman, Robert Allen. As it happens, AT&T is competing with Sprint and MCI for a government telephone contract worth up to $10 billion. As it also happens, Burton's Government Reform and Oversight Committee will oversee the awarding of that contract. Burton's Pebble Beach outing was fairly discreet by the congressman's standards. *The Washington Post* reported this week that last summer Burton attempted to shake down an American lobbyist for Pakistan to the tune of $5,000 by complaining to the Pakistani Embassy of the lobbyist's unhelpfulness and threatening to make sure no members of Congress ever met with the lobbyist again.

Burton's squeeze play was exceptionally gross, but it was not that far removed from the routine in a congressional culture that has been consumed by money. And so last month, as a small band of reformers sought to broaden the fund-raising probe to include the Hill, the normally stoic Senate became skittish. After reluctantly voting to expand the investigation, at least one member dispatched his aides to dispose of scurrilous fund-raising literature. Already, there have been embarrassments for some of the more eager Republican ethics cops. Senate Majority Whip Don Nickles, for instance, was happily leading the attack against Clinton's coffee klatches when it was revealed that he had sold a visit to then-Vice President Dan Quayle's official residence for $1,000 in 1990. "They're all running around in a panic," says GOP Senator John McCain.

What exactly do members fear? For starters, they know that a modest examination of congressional fund-raising practices would show that, like the allegations against Al Gore, they, too, have solicited contributions from their offices, in possible violation of federal law. A more serious inquiry would show that some members have sold legislation to the highest bidder. And even the most cursory probe would reveal to the wider public what is well-known in politics: that the colossal and ever-mounting costs of campaigns have forced officeholders

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to hustle for contributions from Election Day to Election Day; that the huge increase in the sums that special interests now pump into the parties' soft-money bank accounts has compromised the ability of even reform-minded members to vote their consciences; that the post-Watergate regulations have been punctured with so many loopholes that they barely stand; that the Federal Election Commission today barely punishes even flagrant violators of the law; that lawmakers often exploit staff for campaign purposes at taxpayers' expense; and that, on occasion, members partake in money-laundering schemes.

With a record-breaking $2 billion flowing through the campaign finance system in the last election, the Hill's bipartisan menu of fund-raising events reads like a Clinton White House smorgasbord. For $500, you can eat enchiladas and sip margaritas at the Capitol Hill Club with freshman California Representative Christopher Cannon. For $1,000, you can plug the insurance industry at the posh Concord Country Club with New Hampshire Senator Judd Gregg. For $2,500, you can sit with House Minority Whip David Bonior at the Superbowl. For $3,000, you can buy a weeklong ski trip to Vail with Commerce Subcommittee Chairman Michael Oxley. For $5,000, you can dip into a soothing mud bath with Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle at his Napa Valley Weekend, or venture into the backwoods and shoot duck with the Commerce Committee's ranking Democrat, John Dingell. For $10,000, you can visit Chicago's Children's Museum with the House's top Democrat, Dick Gephardt, at the party's national convention; while, for $5,000 more, you can ride on Dennis Conner's yacht and share a private moment with Speaker Gingrich in balmy San Diego. For $15,000, you can sunbathe on the beaches of Nantucket with Senators Bob Kerrey and John Breaux. For $25,000, you can buy a membership to the Congressional Forum, whose elite last year dined monthly with powerful GOP chairmen and, on one occasion, even competed with them in a skeet and trap shoot. And, finally, for $100,000, you can hobnob at the Breakers.

The GOP lawmakers have, in Clintonian fashion, argued that no quid pro quos have been proven. This defense is unsustainable, especially since it is much easier to show a connection in Congress between contributions and official conduct than it is in the executive branch. Last year, to cite one infamous example, the British-owned pharmaceutical company Glaxo-Wellcome, Inc. became the unexpected beneficiary of a technical error in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), passed by Congress in 1994. The glitch, which extended the copyright on drugs like Glaxo's best-selling Zantac, would have cost American consumers—and saved the company—more than $2 billion. But, when Congress moved to correct its mistake, Republican Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah led a GOP effort to quash the correction. On June 28, one day after the Senate voted to not fix the mistake, Glaxo dumped $100,000 into the Republican National Committee. Two months later, it unloaded another $100,000. Overall that year, Glaxo contributed $487,500—nearly $400,000 more than in the previous Congress. And, while Glaxo could legally reward Hatch with only $5,000 in political action committee money, it was able to express its gratitude in larger terms by donating $15 million (at Hatch's encouragement) to a cancer center at a university in the senator's home state. Afterwards, a staffer at the school's development office reportedly cooed: "It is amazing that a company would make such an extraordinary contribution without any strings attached. We are very grateful for the help Senator Hatch has given to us, and we certainly hope he will do more in the future."

Glaxo found another, cheaper, friend in Senator Carol Moseley-Braun. The Illinois freshman, to whom Glaxo previously had paid $15,000 to speak to its executives and who they had flown for free on their corporate jet, was the only Democrat on the Finance Committee to support the company. It turned out to be an excellent investment: the bid to correct the lucrative error lost by a single vote.

In the summer of 1995, GOP Conference Chairman John Boehner, a Republican from Ohio, showed just how blurry the line between the interests of big business and the business of the country can be. During the same week the Appropriations Committee voted against ending a federal price support program for tobacco, Boehner walked the House floor and handed out $500 PAC checks to Republican members from tobacco giant Brown & Williamson. The company's legislative walking-around money was part of a giant increase in tobacco-giving in the last election cycle. Under heavy attack from state governments and the Food and Drug Administration, the industry shelled out $7.9 million to both parties.

Some corporate lobbyists no longer bother with the fiction that they aren't buying law: they actually write the legislation they want and slip it to the lawmakers along with the money. Before the first vote was cast in the 104th Congress, a host of lobbyists who had helped fund the Republican revolution of 1994 sat in Tom DeLay's office penning the anti-regulatory provisions of their dreams. One company, Union Carbide, was able to change an obscure federal law under which it had been fined $50,000. "Any lobbyist worth his salt is going to give legislation to members," says longtime Hill lobbyist Pat O'Donnell, "and sometimes whole sections will be incorporated into the bill. That's effective advocacy: if you want something done, then do the work yourself."

The buying of votes and even of legislation has always been practiced. In his race for the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1757, even George Washington was accused of purchasing voters' support: he handed out fifty gallons of rum punch, forty-six gallons of beer, thirty-four gallons of wine, twenty-eight gallons of rum and, for good measure, two gallons of cider royal. The difference today is not the existence of corruption; it is the scale. Cider is no longer enough, nor is $50,000—the amount exchanged during the late 1970s Abscam

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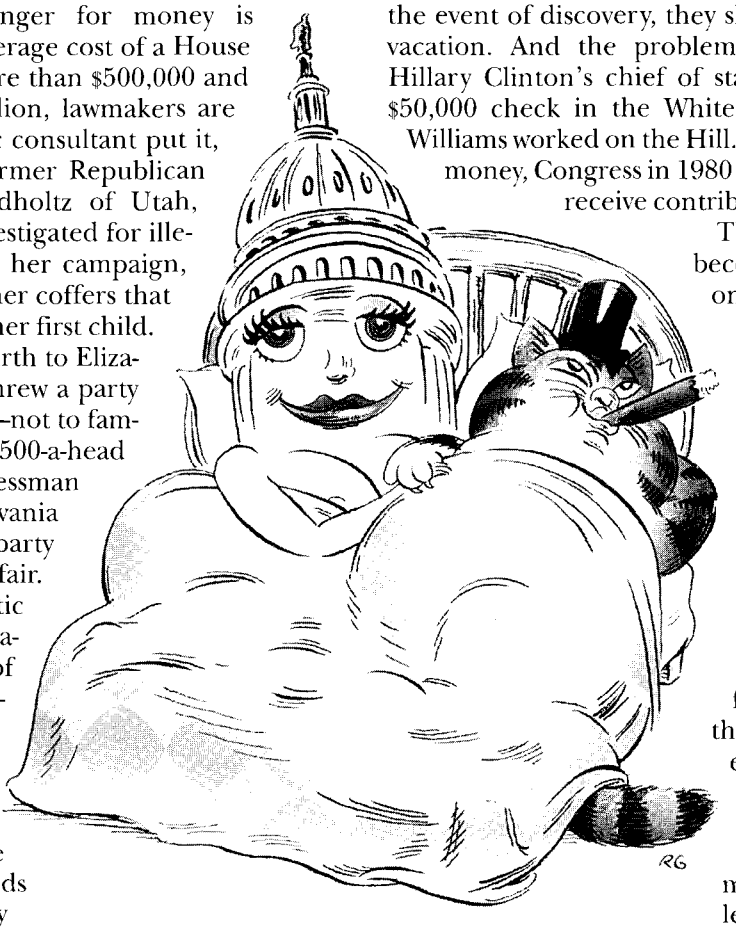
scandal. Now, $100,000 checks from AT&T or Philip Morris are routinely, and legally, deposited in campaign coffers. During the recent telecommunications debate, for example, AT&T's PAC distributed $166,000 to lawmakers the day after they cut a deal favorable to the powerful long distance company, and another $200,000 to the RNC a week later. Meanwhile, Circuit City, one of the country's largest home electronics retailers, went from office to office, shopping for a buyer for a pet provision allowing it to sell its cable boxes directly to consumers. The company finally found a taker in Commerce Committee Chairman Thomas Bliley, a Virginia Republican who quietly slipped the provision into the billion-dollar legislation.

The congressional hunger for money is understandable. As the average cost of a House campaign has risen to more than $500,000 and a Senate race to $4.5 million, lawmakers are forced, as one Democratic consultant put it, to "pimp themselves." Former Republican Representative Enid Waldholtz of Utah, whose ex-husband was investigated for illegally pouring money into her campaign, became so anxious to fill her coffers that she exploited the birth of her first child. Days after she had given birth to Elizabeth in 1995, Waldholtz threw a party to introduce her little girl—not to family or close friends, but to $500-a-head contributors. GOP Congressman Bud Shuster of Pennsylvania has turned his birthday party into a $1,000-a-plate affair. And former Democratic Congresswoman Barbara-Rose Collins, in pursuit of money, even held a fundraiser at a strip club in Detroit.



DRAWING BY ROBERT GROSSMAN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

And, while many lawmakers chastise Al Gore for demeaning the vice presidency by soliciting funds from a federal office, they often do the same. Most members of Congress try to stay within the law; they huddle outside the Capitol and make calls on their cell phones, or trek to their respective campaign committees. But this is sometimes too much trouble. "Anybody who has worked on Capitol Hill knows that it is routine for members of the House, and members of the Senate, to make fund-raising calls from their offices," bipartisan sleazeball Dick Morris recently told CNBC. When one lobbyist recently got a call from a member soliciting donations, he asked why the congressman was whispering. "I'm in the committee room," he answered. Texas Senator Phil Gramm has boasted of his office telephone solicitations. And in 1995, New Hampshire Senator Bob Smith telephoned one potential donor and left a message saying the contributor could call him back in his personal office suite.

Phones aren't the only things that get abused. Just as the White House converted department secretaries virtually into campaign aides, senators and congressmen routinely conscript their own legislative aides into service for their re-election. To comply with the law, most "volunteer" their time. But the House Clerk's reports reveal what is an open secret on the Hill: staffers are often reimbursed with large bonuses at taxpayers' expense when they return—and sometimes even receive federal checks when they are gone. Former Kentucky Democrat Carroll Hubbard, one of the few members ever caught forcing his staffers to work on the campaign, admitted in court that he had told his aides that, in the event of discovery, they should claim they were on vacation. And the problems that Maggie Williams, Hillary Clinton's chief of staff, faces for accepting a $50,000 check in the White House wouldn't exist if Williams worked on the Hill. To facilitate the passing of money, Congress in 1980 made it legal for staffers to receive contributions in their offices.

The drive for money has become so fierce that what once was thought of as mutual back-scratching now more closely resembles arm-twisting. Just before the 1994 elections, Speaker Gingrich warned a group of political action committee directors to ante up: "For anybody that's not onboard now, it's going to be the coldest two years in Washington," Gingrich famously said. Following the election, the newly empowered Republicans compiled a list of who gave to whom—and how much. "We sent a simple message," said one GOP leadership aide. "Pay up or get out." It worked: Republicans outraised Democrats $548.7 to $332.3 million in the last two-year election cycle. Yet many party leaders were still unsatisfied. One corporate political action committee director sent a check to a Republican member, only to get it back a few days later with a Post-it saying there was a zero missing.

It's gotten so bad that even K Street lobbyists are pleading for reform. "The demands of the whole process have gotten so damn large that it is spinning out of control," Wright Andrews, a lobbyist with the law firm Butera & Andrews, told *The Hill*. Deluged with complaints, the American League of Lobbyists created a task force to consider potential reforms.

The unofficial currency of Congress is "soft" dollars: the millions given legally, directly and limitlessly to both

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parties. In theory, this money promotes party-building; in practice, it is a way to evade the caps on individual and corporate contributions. In 1996, the parties amassed $263.5 million in such largesse—more than was spent in the entire 1964 elections. And because soft money often comes in such large sums (Philip Morris handed the National Republican Senatorial Committee $735,338 in one deposit), it is increasingly used by both parties' congressional campaign committees in what appear to be, in essence, laundering schemes.

In the final months of the 1996 cycle, for example, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee apparently funneled $264,000 to the state Democratic Party in Kansas, although it could legally only give $5,000. According to *The Kansas City Star*, it did this through an intricate shell game: writing $5,000 checks to fifteen county committees, most of which then kicked the money back to the state party. As part of the scheme, the DCCC also gave to at least fourteen Democratic committees in other states, which then cut their own checks to the Kansas party. The money was largely spent on ads to rescue two flagging Senate candidates, Jill Docking and Sally Thompson. The NRSC adopted similar tactics to skirt the law: its chairman, Alfonse D'Amato, routed hundreds of thousands in soft money promised to Senate candidates back to his home-state political machine. "There is nothing wrong with that," D'Amato told *The New York Times*. "We don't have an obligation to tell people. Money is fungible."

But, in recent years, politically oriented nonprofits have created something even more dangerous than soft money: untraceable money. Bob Dole's Better America Foundation, a think tank for Republican ideas, spent at least $1.5 million promoting his presidential candidacy before it was shut down in 1995. There were no limitations on giving, and none of the donors had to disclose his name. Gingrich's now notorious GOPAC became a similarly unregulated money-making machine. Although ostensibly created to recruit candidates for the state legislature—leaving it outside the purview of the FEC—it quickly became a vehicle for seizing control of the House. Emulating the speaker, Majority Whip Tom DeLay in 1995 created a state "leadership" PAC in Virginia to promote Republican campaigns. Though from Texas, DeLay found in Old Dominion the perfect loophole: the state has no limits on direct corporate contributions. So the former exterminator legally took in $175,000 in corporate "soft money," including a $73,000 donation from R.J. Reynolds. Because they are not subject to FEC rules regulating the use of campaign funds for personal reasons, leadership PACs often become virtual slush funds. *Legal Times* reported last month that Senator Edward Kennedy spent most of the $700,000 in his leadership PAC on limousines, hotel bills, catering services and restaurants in 1995 and 1996—when he wasn't even up for re-election.

Foreign countries, seeking to influence Congress, have found their own way to get around the law that forbids them from giving to American campaigns. In 1996 more than 100 staffers and nearly two dozen members of Congress enjoyed all-expense paid trips to Taiwan as part of the island's campaign to restore diplomatic relations with the United States. "I had a great time," one aide told *The Washington Post*. "We stayed first class, definitely ate first class; they bought us all kinds of gifts, introduced us to beautiful girls who escorted us around."

The one mechanism set up to stop all this—the Federal Election Commission—has been disemboweled by the Congress it is supposed to regulate. Divided equally between three Republican and three Democratic appointed commissioners, the FEC today operates in a state of near-paralysis. Lawmakers often flout spending limits, knowing that, even if the commissioners agree on a fine, it will be imposed long after they are safely ensconced in office. "Congress intentionally created the weakest regulatory agency because it regulates us," Senator Bob Kerrey recently told *The Baltimore Sun*. "It created a dog with no teeth."

Because most of what members of Congress do in their fund-raising is legal, lawmakers have insisted there is no reason to investigate them. "It's not that I'm protecting anyone," says GOP Senator Rick Santorum. "Anyone who has done something illegal should be investigated." All right, here are some potential candidates.

According to court documents filed by her former campaign treasurer, Illinois Senator Carol Moseley-Braun spent $39,000 in campaign donations for designer clothes, jewelry and a stereo. Also according to court documents, Representative Jay Kim, a California Republican, recently said he would invoke the Fifth Amendment if called to testify in the money-laundering trial involving his former campaign treasurer. House Transportation Chairman Bud Shuster and an aide are being probed by the Justice Department for their involvement in a $10 billion highway project in Boston. Democratic Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas has been accused by a former administrative assistant of having staffers illegally use office equipment owned by the government for campaign purposes. Congressman Frank Mascara, a Pennsylvania Democrat, was recently fined $50,000 for breaking federal campaign laws by transferring money from a local account to a federal one. The Capitol is not even insulated from the more damaging scandal currently shaking the White House: illegal donations from Chinese and other Asian interests. The same dubious donors being probed for contributing to the DNC, including Charles Yah Lin Trie and Johnny Chung, have given at least $20,000 to Democratic lawmakers. Among the beneficiaries: House and Senate Minority Leaders Dick Gephardt (who this week returned $22,000 in suspect contributions) and Tom Daschle. And, of course, there's Burton the ethics investigator.

So there are eight members of Congress who may have been party to breaking the law in their fund-raising efforts. After they are properly investigated, maybe we can go after the ones who do it legally. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

The citizenship boom

It was to be expected that the enormous surge of people applying to become, and becoming, citizens would at some point lead to controversy. On the one hand, Americans want immigrants to become citizens. (If they learn that longtime residents are *not* citizens, they are likely to ask, in surprise, "why not?" The idea that people may be attached to distant, poorer and less powerful countries is difficult for Americans to understand.) But, on the other hand, it is not surprising that the astonishing rise in the number of people applying for citizenship (1.3 million in 1996, an estimated 1.8 million in 1997, compared to an average of 220,000 new citizens a year in the 1980s) has led to some uneasiness, as well as a widened scope for error and scandal.

We have had both: the possibility that the Immigration and Naturalization Service reduced the long wait between application for citizenship and completion of the process in order to increase the number of Democratic voters in 1996 has outraged Republicans. In congressional hearings, witnesses have also attacked the INS for weakening the statutorily required standards for citizenship—knowledge of English, American history and the Constitution. Republican congressmen cannot criticize the INS for becoming more efficient and productive. So they have attacked the INS for granting citizenship before having 180,000 applicants checked for criminal records by the FBI. (I wonder how many informed Americans even knew that prospective citizens undergo an FBI check.)

Other scandals have also focused attention on citizenship: it has been charged that persons who applied for citizenship—but were not yet citizens—voted in the close election for Congress in southern California in which Democrat Loretta Sanchez defeated Republican Congressman Robert Dornan by a mere 979 votes. And, of course, there's the scandal around political contributions from foreign sources, which has allowed some congressmen to propose that only citizens be allowed to make political contributions.

But the scandals have not focused on, or brought attention to, what I think really concerns Americans when they see a million new citizens a year. I believe many people must be asking themselves whether all these people are becoming citizens for the right reasons. It is clear many are rushing to citizenship now to escape welfare legislation, which cuts non-citizens off from Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps and other benefits. But, then, what are the right reasons for becoming a citizen? After all, if people become citizens to advance their self-interest, isn't that the reason they immigrate in the first place? They do not all come to escape political or religious persecution. Yet, we do have an exalted idea of what it means to be an American, and we would like fealty to our principles to play a larger role in the mix of motives that lead people to become citizens.

Ideally, we want people to become citizens because they admire the United States for its highest goals and accomplishments, and wish to become a part of our people, participating as full partners in the governing of the nation. We don't want them to become citizens because they envy our wealth or our standard of living. We want them to become citizens because they want to bind themselves to the United States out of heartfelt agreement with our finest commitments—to the liberty of the individual, to the fullest measure of equality in the status of individuals, to ordered democratic government. Those are the values embodied in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution. We want them to be committed to our form of government, as laid down in these documents. We think it works well, and we expect new citizens to accept these arrangements and, indeed, to defend them.

Is this impossibly idealistic? Very likely, and yet our law asks for nothing less. We ask that prospective citizens be acquainted with American history and government, that they know something of the Constitution, that they be loyal to the United States above any other country, that they know English—with certain exceptions made for age. We make a great deal of becoming a citizen, rather more than other countries. We once celebrated, I recall, an "I am an American day," marking the day when the oath of citizenship was taken. I don't think other countries, however difficult the process of attaining citizenship (and it is rather more difficult in most other countries), have any equivalent to the process by which one becomes a citizen here, or to the final ceremony which marks the attainment of citizenship. In this country, hundreds (or even thousands) participate in a ceremony conducted by a judge, in the presence of friends and family, in locations meant to inspire awe and love of country. In Boston, these ceremonies are conducted in Faneuil Hall, the "cradle of liberty." (In major gateway cities, owing to greater numbers, they have to take place in convention halls and stadiums, which take away some of the dignity provided by an historic space.)

The concern today is that citizenship is being devalued, and I share that concern. One problem, however, in maintaining the process at an exalted level is that we have become a different country, less chauvinistic, very likely less patriotic, certainly more cynical about our government and its virtues. Indeed, the immigrant may think better of America on the whole than the native.

Undoubtedly, very ordinary motives are at play in the decision to become a citizen. But there are higher motives, too. We want to shore these up, we want to avoid making the process purely mechanical, bureaucratic, matter of fact. With more than a million new American citizens each year, that is not an easy assignment, and it is understandable that the INS has sped up and shortened—and possibly removed some dignity from—the process. But it is a process now more than two centuries old, with a remarkable degree of continuity to it. Some parts of the oath of citizenship, prescribed by law, may go back almost 200 years. The prospective citizen swears: "I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure any allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince.... I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law ..." and so on.

Antique sentiments all, and I am sure many of us feel we could do better today, and we should reshape the oath in more contemporary form, the way ancient prayers are updated. But the making of Americans should always have something special about it. We could not today bring the same exalted tone to the oath. I would vote against trying.

We will undoubtedly continue to debate the process of granting citizenship, but we should be cautious in making changes. Our tendency today would be to strip seriousness from the process, and that would be a mistake, for there is little enough that is taken seriously in our lives today.

NATHAN GLAZER

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Life Studies

Those who think they know all they need to know about Nelson Mandela are precisely the ones who may profit most from **Mandela** (Island). This well-crafted documentary may perhaps give them more information as such, but just because of their prior interest they will especially respond to the fullness of Mandela's being. (And there are vivid glimpses of men and women who have figured in his life—which is to say, his struggle.)

I'm not going to recount the life here. I'll mention only two moments in the film that I certainly won't forget. Toward the end Mandela's sister speaks to the camera of her brother's steadfastness and perseverance. Her face itself is a statement; and she speaks in Xhosa (with subtitles, of course), the language that was Mandela's first. The language itself, ancient and African, is a marker of the beginning of Mandela's journey to his people's liberation, world recognition and the Nobel Peace Prize. (A prize that—both generously and wisely—Mandela insisted on sharing with F.W. de Klerk, the former South African president who became Mandela's deputy president.)

The second moment is during a return trip to Robben Island, Mandela's place of imprisonment for twenty-seven years. He made this visit as part of his collaboration with the filmmakers, Jo Menell and Angus Gibson. Here he tells us that, when he first arrived, a guard tried to bully him, and he told the guard that, if he were mistreated, he would take the matter to the highest court in the land. Even if we concede that Mandela was already not an obscure figure—he was a political leader and a member of the first black law firm in Johannesburg—still, his bearing as he recounts the incident verifies his dignity. It's all the more telling when we see the lime quarry where he subsequently labored for years and where he might have met with an "accident."

The film is not, could not be, a complete history. (For instance, the subject of the Inkatha Party is skimped.) Yet the picture is full enough to revive a doubt I have always had about a line in Bertolt Brecht. In *Galileo* a young man says, "Unhappy is the land that has no heroes;" and Galileo replies, "Unhappy the land that needs a hero." I question that reply. Not just in South Africa, but in every land around the globe, we have all needed Mandela.

Spalding Gray presents *his* life, another segment of it anyway, in **Gray's Anatomy** (Northern Arts). *Swimming to Cambodia* and *Monster in a Box* dealt with his experiences as a film actor and as a novelist. Part Three (shown at the Film Forum in New York) gives us his adventures in eye trouble—a "macular pucker"—and how he got rid of it. Much more than orthodox medicine was involved: Gray's healing-quest took him to a Native American Sweat Ceremony and a Filipino doctor who is called "the Elvis Presley of psychic surgeons"—exactly the sorts of detour from the usual that we expect from Gray.

As I'm sure he would agree, it's monstrous to couple his name with Mandela's; still, the coincidence of seeing his film just after the one above juxtaposes the two—at least long enough to mark the difference between a life lived in self-exploration and a life whose self-exploration is a benefit to others. But this is hardly to lambaste Gray for not being Mandela. In fact, if we can't have many Mandelas, then let's have more Grays. The world would have more intelligent dry humor and, even if circuitously, a bit more fellow-feeling.

Yet this installment of Gray's autobiography, if that's what it is, is thin. It's padded, at the start and elsewhere, with interviews—people who have had various eye afflictions. Also, Steven Soderbergh, who directed, thought it necessary to tart up the film with multiple colored lighting effects, as Gray just sits there and talks. Those effects only make us think that the speaker and the director are nervous about the material.

Next time, and we can all hope there will be one, less color and more Gray.

Oh, all right—a word about Howard Stern's film. **Private Parts** (Paramount) is also an autobiography: Stern plays himself in a script derived from his book by Len Blum and Michael Kalesniko, directed (with some agility) by Betty Thomas. We watch Stern's life from adolescence through college to increasing

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Designated Mourner. *Wallace Shawn's extraordinary theater piece, presented by the camera. Three speakers sit at a table and, by recounting their fates, recount the political and cultural decline of an epoch. Chief of the three exceptional speakers: Mike Nichols. (Yes, that Mike Nichols.) (Reviewed 3/24/97)* **Hamlet.** *Kenneth Branagh, a generally fine company, the full text. Occasionally too clever, but electric. (1/27/97)* **Prisoner of the Mountains.** *Tolstoi's tale of the Caucasus, deftly updated, keenly directed and acted to bring out the moving moral drama. (2/24/97)* **Sling Blade.** *Wretched title for a deeply poignant work—written and directed by Billy Bob Thornton, the leading actor. In Arkansas, a man, after spending twenty-five years in a mental hospital because he murdered, tries the world again. (2/10/97)*—**SK**

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notoriety-cum-success as a disc jockey. In every job he outrages his bosses with his topics and language; in every job he wins the day—and night—through his ratings. Along the way, too, he wins his wife, who is not played by his wife. His candor about marital privacies is only part of his persona. But, as generally noted, *Private Parts* is less offensive, more endurable, than was anticipated.

The great American national sport at the moment is analysis of Howard Stern and his success. I mustn't shrink from my turn at bat. Many have used the phrase "bad boy" about him. I'll use it, too, but I mean bad *boy*—plus sex. He says all the things that children say spontaneously—scatological, anatomical reactions to people's appearance—all the things that adults still think but no longer dare to utter; and, in addition to this prepubescent frankness, Stern is horny. *Pace* Freud, civilization has few discontents for Howard.

If he showed anything like Lenny Bruce's political concerns, Stern would probably be taken up by young intellectuals. Instead, he is a vicar for millions of constrained grown-up children, as he flouts their parents' strictures for them.

In 1968 I went up to Columbia University for a performance by Lillian Gish. She sat on a high stool at the side of a stage, commenting while we watched an assemblage of clips from many of her silent films. It was like being in the presence of someone who had been present at the creation.

The other evening I went up to the Library of the Performing Arts in Lincoln Center to hear Irene Worth talk, warmly and wittily, about her late friend Lillian (d. 1993, aged 97). Then Worth read some letters to Gish from John Gielgud, for whom Gish played Ophelia in New York in 1936, and from Noel Coward, who was in Griffith's *Hearts of the World* with her in 1918. This time I was in the presence of history.

The Worth evening was the first in a series of ten events—more readings of Gish correspondence by distinguished people, performances of scenes, some films, a lecture—all arranged to celebrate the acquisition by this library of Gish's memorabilia and letters (10,000 of them). Gish did a great deal of theater work, but surely she will be remembered as a film figure. One result of the lovely Worth evening was to underscore yet again what an infant the film art is. The career of one woman, recently deceased, encompassed almost all of film's life so far. •

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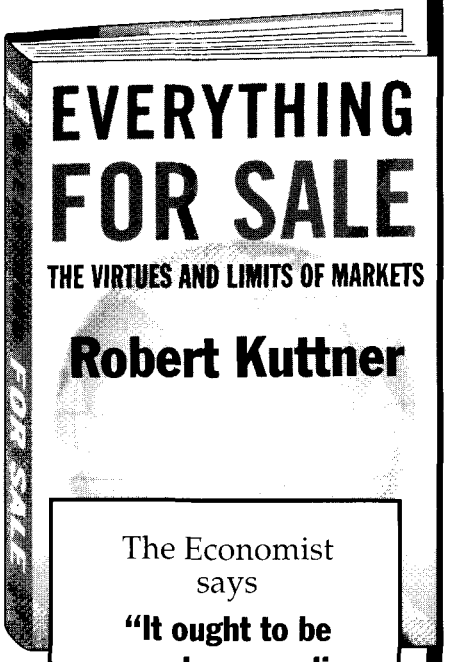

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Robert Brustein on Theater

The Rebirth of Irish Drama

No theory has yet accounted for the way the arts seem to flower for a period in one country and then, like Canadian geese or rambling roses, migrate to other climes. Was it democracy at home and foreign conquest that stimulated the tremendous outpouring of plays, poems, sculpture and architecture in Periclean Athens? Was it homage to an idealized Virgin Queen and the spirit of exploration that animated the verse drama of Shakespeare and his numerous playwriting contemporaries? Was it the looming Russian revolution that ignited the creative spark of Chekhov and Gorky? Did the disillusionment of the Weimar Republic galvanize the febrile German neo-Romantic art of Wedekind, Brecht, Grosz and Pabst? Perhaps a national destiny is linked to a burgeoning culture, but, if so, how do we account for the sudden efflorescence of Ibsen and Strindberg in sleepy Scandinavia, and how do we explain the fact that Switzerland, a land noted primarily for Alpine vistas, milk chocolate and cuckoo clocks, suddenly engendered, almost simultaneously, Frederick Dürrenmatt and Max Frisch?

Irish drama is another of those national anomalies. After a Renaissance led by Yeats, Synge and O'Casey, among others, and commonly linked to the struggle for independence, Irish drama lay dead or dormant for forty years. Now at the end of the century Ireland again seems to be the spawning ground for some of the strongest dramatic writing in the world. Two playwrights (others would include Brian Friel and make it three) have emerged to justify this statement: Sebastian Barry and Martin McDonagh.

Of these, only Barry has made it to these shores as yet, and only with his fifth play, *The Steward of Christendom*, which received glowing reviews when it opened recently at BAM's Majestic Theater. As for McDonagh, he has had two of his plays performed in London this year, each winning major prizes and public acclaim, though both were written when the playwright was still in his early 20s. His very first work, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*, produced at the Royal Court in association with the Druid Theatre, has dramaturgical weaknesses, but it is clearly the product of a major writer. Indeed, on the basis of this play alone, I am willing to make the rash claim that McDonagh is destined to be one of the theatrical luminaries of the twenty-first century.

The play concerns a 40-year-old spinster named Maureen, caring for her infirm mother, Meg (a ghastly old crone), in a small town in Connemara. Maureen embodies the despair of the unmarried Irish woman. A victim of her age and domestic circumstances, ensnared in a loveless environment like a marmoset with one foot in a trap, she snarls at her mother and her fate with the eloquence of a foulmouthed Medea. After a neighbor, Pato, invites her to a family outing, she brings him to her home and tries to make love to him, indifferent to her mother's selfish disapproval.

Having left for London to work as a bricklayer, Pato sends Maureen a letter asking her to accompany him to America as his wife. Meg reads the letter before Maureen comes home and burns it. When Maureen discovers this betrayal—too late to preserve the relationship—she scalds the old woman with hot water and kills her. Previously, Maureen had been institutionalized with a mental disorder. Now delusional, half mad and turning into the very image of her mother at the end, she locks herself in the house and consigns herself to eternal loneliness.

The plot of the play (like that of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*) depends too heavily on an undelivered letter. Still, it has the remorseless drive of the greatest tragedy. As in *Othello*, we know what's going to happen, yet we pray that it won't. McDonagh's uncanny insight into the dynamics of a sour symbiotic mother-daughter relationship is exceeded only by his understanding of the mean-spiritedness and small-mindedness of Irish provincial life. *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* would be an extraordinary achievement for a mature playwright. It was a dazzling debut for a writer of 23.

His next play, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, is an even finer work. Currently playing at the Royal National Theatre's Cottesloe, with a wonderful cast under the scorching direction of Nicholas Hytner, it concerns the stir aroused on a small Aran island when the inhabitants learn that the great documentary filmmaker Robert Flaherty is coming to a neighboring island to film his movie, *Man of Aran*. It was Flaherty, coincidentally, who later told John Millington Synge about the verbal splendors to be found among these islanders, converting this would-be Bohemian expatriate, then living in Paris and trying to imitate French Symbolist poetry, into the national playwright of Ireland. "In countries," wrote Synge, "where the imagination of the people, and the language they use, is rich and living, it is possible for a writer to be rich and copious in his words. . . ." *The Cripple of Inishmaan* fulfills Synge's command that dramatic language be "as fully flavored as a nut or an apple."

Like Synge, McDonagh has no illusions about the heroic nature of his countrymen, whatever the musical quality of their speech. Most of the inhabitants of Inishmaan seem like Irish versions of the Jukes and the Kalikaks—crude, vindictive creatures just a cut above the bestial. There is Jimmypateenmike, the professional rumor-monger, who would sell his mother for a bit of gossip, and no wonder—in this deadly wasteland, the discovery of "a sheep in Kerry with no ears at all" is big news. There is his 96-year-old mother, Mammy O'Dougal, who has kept herself alive by pouring gallons of whiskey down her throat. There is Helen, a wild, fulminating wench who delights in breaking eggs over people's heads. Pretty enough to have her ass groped by priests who like to show her their cocks ("I don't know why"), she scorns all mankind as "boring feckers." There is the boatman Babbybobby, who, though endowed with a little more human feeling than the others, also displays a violent temper when he feels he has been crossed.

And there is Billy, the cripple of Inishmaan, a kind of sacred fool on the order of Prince Mishkin, a sweet-natured man with a hundred troubles, including bad arms and bad legs, who spends most of his time looking at cows. Desperately in love with Helen, and even more desperate to get off the island, he cons Babbybobby into taking him across the seas to audition for the role of the cripple in Flaherty's movie and actually wins a Hollywood screen test.

But Billy doesn't get the part, and when he returns to Inishmaan he is riddled with consumption and disillusionment. He has seen America—a fantasy land for the population of Inishmaan but for Billy no better than Ireland, "full of fat women with beards." Badly beaten by Babbybobby for having deceived him, and spurned in his love for Helen, he seems just as trapped as Maureen in *The Beauty Queen of Leenane*. He fills a bag with cans of peas for the purpose of drowning himself. But, at the last min-

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ute, Helen accepts his invitation to take a walk ("no kissing or groping, cos I don't want you ruining me feckin reputation"). Despite this caution, she nevertheless deigns to give Billy a kiss, though not before poking him hard in his bandaged face. Elated after she leaves, Billy is soon wheezing and coughing blood, doomed to die at the very moment when life at last seems worthwhile.

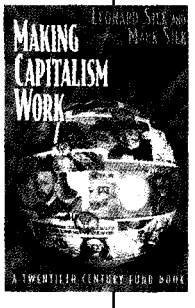
McDonagh is a natural storyteller who knows how to express a theme through action, and he knows how to create a gallery of fascinating rogues. The energy of his plays is prodigious. And, while most of the younger British dramatists (such as Mark Ravenhill, whose *Shopping and Fucking* is currently shocking and flustering London) are drawing characters sunk in anomie and despair, McDonagh has managed to celebrate what remains enduring and alive in human nature even in the most appalling circumstances.

Sebastian Barry is another extraordinary Irish writer, though probably more of a poet than a playwright. *The Steward of Christendom*, like his other plays, is pulsing with vibrant language, often in the form of monologues spoken by the central character, Thomas Dunne. A former constable in the Dublin Metropolitan Police, now in his mid-70s, Dunne is being confined in a mental institution (to judge by Barry and McDonagh, half the Irish population lives in madhouses). Dunne has been characterized by *Newsweek*'s Jack Kroll as "Lear in long johns," which seems apt. He has three daughters, he's mad as a hatter, and he spends most of the play lolling about in dirty long underwear.

But, like that of Lear, Thomas's madness is informed by deeper insights into the human condition than those of the sane. His "sleepy sleepy" ramblings have some of the visionary power of the sleeper in *Finnegans Wake*. And, while being beaten by his keeper for failing to use his bedpan ("a deserted house needs no gutter"), he has recurrent memories that evoke his entire past. As a loyal servant of the crown ("a steward of Christendom") at a time when Michael Collins was storming Dublin Castle, Dunne shares the guilt of many Irish royalists who resisted the unification of Ireland, mixed with pride in his uniform over having performed his job well. Reliving the moment when Collins was killed in Cork, he sobs uncontrollably over a time when Ireland was once loyal, unified and true.

His relations with his daughters are equally ambiguous. One of his girls has escaped to America and another is married with children, but the third, a woman with a deformed back as a result of polio, is still around to tend to her father in his distress. Dunne's greatest despair, however, is over his dead son, Willie, a victim of the First World War, who reappears in his delusions as a mute child consoling his father, much like Leopold Bloom's dead son in *Ulysses*. In the exquisite closing moments, Dunne tells a moving story of how his own Dad forgave him for disobeying his wishes by sparing a dog who had killed a sheep (thereby showing "the mercy of fathers, when the child sees at last that he is loved"). After hugging him, Willie lays his head on his father's chest, as Dunne goes off into the silent consolation of sleep (or death).

Apart from this moment and a few others, not much of *The Steward of Christendom* is dramatized. Often you feel as if you're absorbing monologues rather than watching enacted scenes, and the continuity of Dunne's story is fuzzy. But the language is so rich, and the acting (under Max Stafford-Clark's direction) so powerful, that the structural lapses of the play can be forgiven. Donal McCann, in particular, his head shaved to emphasize his jug ears, is giving the performance of an already celebrated career. Like the character he is playing,



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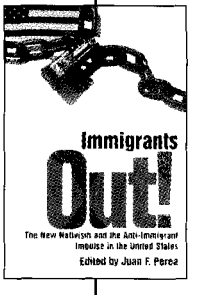

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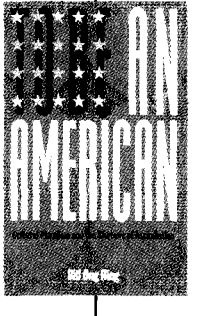

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he has eyes that look inward rather than outward, into a moment in Irish history when things could have been different. Sebastian Barry's work and that of Martin McDonagh transform that history. Their plays are enduring testimonies to how the power of art can redeem the past. •

The Money Trap

By Robert Kagan

The Coming Conflict with China
by Richard Bernstein and Ross H. Munro

(Knopf, 245 pp., $23)

In 1821, when American merchants hungry for the China trade were willingly submitting to the Qing dynasty's exacting and sometimes humiliating tribute system, a small incident revealed the China market's fatal attraction. A sailor onboard the American merchant ship *Emily* dropped a pot over the side. The pot landed on the head of a Chinese woman, who fell into the water and drowned. Chinese authorities seized a seaman named Terranova and sentenced him to death. Well, maybe "seized" is not the right word. Terranova was safely in the hands of his comrades who at first refused to turn him over, insisting that he be tried onboard the *Emily*. According to more than one historian, it was not even clear that Terranova was responsible for the woman's death. But, when the Chinese authorities threatened to suspend all American trading privileges in Canton, the American merchant community panicked. After lodging a formal protest, they handed the unfortunate Terranova over to the Chinese authorities. He was tried without any Americans present, found guilty and executed the next day by strangulation. The American trade in Canton continued.

For two centuries, the lure of the China market has had this kind of morally disorienting effect on American businessmen. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the possibility of selling 100 million pairs of underwear stirred the owners of textile mills in New York, New England and in the struggling postbellum South into a frenzy for access to the Chinese trade. The Western Union Company mesmerized potential investors with a scheme to link up China's "great commercial cities" and their "over four hundred and twenty millions" of customers. Producers of cotton, steel, iron, kerosene and flour saw boundless riches lying before them in the world's most populous country. The realization of such riches, of course, proved always beyond their reach. Even at the height of America's quest for the "open door" a century ago, China absorbed less than 2 percent of American exports. But what historians now call the "myth of the China market" was never built upon immediate profits, which were always negligible. The myth was built upon the glittering possibility of future reward. And it was in pursuit of that distant prize that sacrifices had to be made in the short run by investors, and occasionally by unfortunate individuals such as Terranova, and, when necessary, by the nation.

In their effort to enlist the government's support for their dreams, businessmen and their political supporters liked to argue that their interests and the nation's were identical. Upon their success in China, the businessmen claimed, rested America's future as a great nation in its competition with the world's other great nations. "All Europe is seizing on China," cried Massachusetts Senator Henry Cabot Lodge at the turn of the century, "and if we do not establish ourselves in the East that vast trade, from which we must draw our future prosperity ... will be practically closed to us forever." Business interests even discovered ideological and geostrategic arguments to bolster their case. They argued that the open door in China had to be preserved so that Americans might reform and modernize that great country, so that a reformed China, in turn, could resist being swallowed by its giant Russian neighbor.

Still, American businessmen usually had little success in shaping American foreign policy around their special needs. Although an entire school of revisionist historians arose in the 1950s and '60s to explain that the diplomacy of the United States had been dominated by the search for export markets for American businesses, it is surprising how little this was true, either at the turn of the century or later. In the nineteenth century, American merchants found little backing from Washington when they ran into trouble in far-off places such as China. Even under the muscular presidencies of McKinley and Roosevelt, the American government's effort to pry open the door to the China trade was halfhearted and ultimately inconsequential, a victim of both popular and presidential apathy. "Public opinion is dull on the question of China," Theodore Roosevelt declared laconically when the Open Door looked to be shutting in the American businessman's face. Roosevelt didn't much trust American businessmen, in any case, recalling their almost uniform opposition to the war against Spain in 1898. And he was generally unimpressed with claims about the great riches to be had in China. His fellow expansionist Alfred Thayer Mahan predicted that profits in China would likely "fall very short of the rosy hopes of trade suggested by the mere words 'four hundred millions of people.' "

Then, and for most of the rest of the century, American foreign policy balanced business interests against strategic and ideological interests. And notwithstanding the contrary claims of neo-Marxist and "corporatist" theories of American foreign policy, those were not usually considered to be all one and the same thing. Presidents liked to help American business abroad if they could, but they generally recognized that a businessman's interest was not identical to the national interest. Even pro-business conservatives knew that businessmen were not entirely trustworthy in matters of foreign policy, that (as George Will nicely observed about a similar problem in the Reagan administration's attitude toward the Soviet Union), they loved capitalism more than they loathed communism.

During the cold war everyone remembered Lenin's prediction that the capitalists would sell the rope by which they would be hanged. When Occidental Petroleum's Armand Hammer and Pepsico's Donald Kendall insisted that their business interests in the Soviet Union coincided with the nation's interest in détente, they were regarded as disingenuous. Not many believed that selling Pepsi in the Soviet Union would hasten the fall of communism. It was not that businessmen were bad; their legitimate goal of maximizing profits merely conflicted sometimes with the nation's moral, strategic and even economic aspirations. The problem was that businessmen sometimes threw their Terranovas overboard if that was the price of doing business.

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The alarming degree to which American leaders and strategists have recently forgotten this basic truth is one of the themes of Richard Bernstein's and Ross H. Munro's important and challenging new book, *The Coming Conflict with China.* After laying out their well-documented case that the current generation of Chinese leaders means to challenge the United States for predominance in East Asia, they make clear that America's Achilles' heel in this coming struggle is likely to be the powerful lure of the China market on some of America's biggest and most influential corporations. Although China is "an adversary, a dictatorship, an emerging superpower whose interests are at odds with those of the United States," Bernstein and Munro write, the Chinese leadership has nevertheless been able to "enlist behind it one of the broadest business efforts to influence national policy in all of American history." If the United States and China do come to blows in the next decade or two, and the American people find their government unprepared, some future Joseph McCarthy is going to have a field day.

China's success in shaping American foreign policy through the American business community has been extraordinary. Until recently, moreover, it has been well shielded from public scrutiny, not by any campaign of secrecy but by a powerful consensus of the foreign policy establishment on what the proper policy toward China ought to be. Thus journalists and experts and commentators have consistently described the Clinton administration's famous reversal of its policy toward China in 1994 as an intellectual maturation, a journey from woolly Wilsonian idealism to hardheaded Kissingerian realism. In the common telling of the story, President Clinton finally came to comprehend the childishness of using the threat of economic sanctions to modify Chinese behavior, and to realize that trading with China would actually hasten the already well-advanced transition to democracy there. The callow campaigner of 1992 discovered in 1994 that the world was more complicated than he thought.

This foreign policy bildungsroman is attractive to many people because it involves deep theory and grand strategy. But it is a lot of nonsense. Bernstein and Munro show exactly how President Clinton had things explained to him in the first months of 1994. Early in 1994, when the Clinton administration, led by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Winston Lord, was girding itself for a confrontation with the Chinese over their domestic repression and their international miscreance, American businesses suddenly found themselves "inking agreements with China at a faster pace than had been seen before, or has been seen since." In January, China floated $1 billion in bonds in American financial markets using Merrill Lynch as its lead underwriter. In February, Ford Motor Company was deep in negotiations for a joint venture with China to manufacture auto parts. In March, the chairman of IBM was in China concluding joint venture agreements. In April, Chinese officials in Shanghai invited Time Warner executives to discuss opening an amusement park; Vice Premier Zou Jiahua traveled to AT&T's New Jersey offices to sign $500 million worth of contracts; and Bill Gates met with Jiang Zemin and boasted of Microsoft's plan to increase sales in China by 50 percent a year. In May, Boeing officials revealed that they were close to completing a mammoth $5 billion sale of commercial jetliners to China.

This explosion of economic activity reverberated through the political world. China has been open to Western trade and investment for more than a decade, but any businessman trying to get into the Chinese market knows how long, frustrating and often futile the process usually is. With billions of dollars on the line, corporations lobbied hard against the Clinton administration's plan to use Most Favored Nation status as a lever to force an easing of Chinese repression. In early May 1994, Tom Foley, then Speaker of the House, who represented the district where Boeing is headquartered and who was in a tight race for re-election, publicly broke with the administration on China policy. Linking trade with human rights, he complained, was "very public and challenging and confrontational." In April of that same year, Mario Cuomo, then governor of New York, also in a struggle for his political life, signed an agreement with a Chinese trade delegation to facilitate exports from New York's high-technology firms. In announcing the deal, this Democrat who prides himself on his moral exquisiteness made clear his opposition to the administration's policy.

These were just the more prominent instances of a pervasive campaign by American corporations to remind elected leaders that jobs and profits were at stake in the U.S.-China relationship. As Bernstein and Munro recount, the Chinese government also worked to divide the Clinton administration itself "after accurately discerning a split ... between the human rights promoters at the State Department and the business-first elements elsewhere in the government." In mid-April, Chinese Foreign Trade Minister Wu Yi signed an agreement with Commerce Secretary Ron Brown to establish permanent working groups on trade and investment. Meanwhile, Wu's host and promoter "in all but name" was the U.S.-China Business Council, whose members were simultaneously feting Wu and lobbying Washington to protect China's MFN status. The quadrangular relationship between the Chinese government, American businesses, the Commerce Department and Democratic Party fundraising—all of which eventually came together in the person of John Huang—was an unsurprising next step in the entrenchment of Beijing's influence over American policy-making.

The State Department was no match for this combined economic and political onslaught. When Secretary Christopher traveled to China in March 1994, he had little idea that the tough policy he was bringing to Beijing had crumbled behind him in Washington. He was in for a world-class humiliation. Playing right into the hands of the Chinese leadership, Christopher took an unusually stern tone in demanding that they improve their behavior or face trade sanctions. The Chinese, in turn, read Christopher the riot act, rejecting him to such

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After William Hawkins' "Black Dog"

And in the diminished year
unleashed your monster,
your beautiful, common, familiar

family dog. Could it be
the denuded woods of winter,
the trees' black stumps and limbs
ready to smoke, to burst into flame

in the flame-colored scene through which
your black dog roots, his one red eye
knowing and innocent, like an infant's,
his head too large, his tail like a club,
the animal himself tall as the tallest tree—

your dreamed, wolfish dog set free to roam,
to turn your realm into a blessed inferno?

NANCY SCHOENBERGER

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a degree that he never again returned to China. After Christopher's angry departure, the Chinese completed their rout of the Clinton administration's policy. They re-arrested Wei Jingsheng, a leading dissident who had had the audacity to meet with an American human rights official before Christopher's trip. Weeks later, they amended China's public order law to expand police powers to detain and restrict democratic and labor union activists. Nor was the Chinese response limited to the area of human rights. As Bernstein and Munro point out, the Beijing government also flouted the Clinton administration's warnings about arms proliferation by shipping chemical weapons to Iran and missile parts to Pakistan.

The Chinese government had decisively established that human rights were not a fit subject for bilateral discussion. But that was not all that it established. Beijing's strategy aimed not only at delinking trade and human rights in American policy but, far more ambitiously, at demonstrating that American pressure could not possibly succeed in curbing Chinese behavior *on any issue.*

Bernstein and Munro convincingly demonstrate that the Chinese government had by 1993 adopted a far more aggressive foreign and defense policy aimed specifically at what senior military leaders for the first time officially designated as China's main enemy: the United States. The collapse of China's most dangerous adversary, the Soviet Union, and the amazing performance of the U.S. military in the Gulf war combined with Chinese leaders' fears about internal instability after the Tiananmen Square demonstrations and massacre to stir up a new belligerence in powerful circles. In April 1993, Bernstein and Munro report, 116 high-ranking officers of the People's Liberation Army wrote Deng and Jiang Zemin demanding an end to Deng's policy of "tolerance, forbearance, and compromise toward the United States." And, in November, a meeting of top foreign and military specialists produced a report describing the United States as China's "international archenemy."

The report's analysis of American policy was striking for its mixture of perceptiveness and paranoia. "From the present stage to the beginning of the next century," the specialists declared, "the major target of American hegemonism and power politics is China.... Its strategy toward China is, through economic activities and trade, to control and sanction China and force China to change the course of its ideology and make it incline toward the West." Wilhelmine Germany developed a similarly "rational paranoia" about Great Britain in the years leading up to World War I—a paranoia of the "if you knew what we were planning to do, you'd be trying to stop us" variety.

By the end of 1993, Bernstein and Munro argue, the more virulent anti-American forces in the Chinese government had succeeded in overturning Deng's more moderate approach. The new, tougher line was not only a response to American actions. It was also, and perhaps primarily, an effort to deal with the domestic crisis caused by Deng's economic reforms. A Communist Party leadership that could no longer command the ideological allegiance of its followers instead fanned nationalist passions as a means of bolstering its legitimacy. The weaker post-Deng dictatorship needed a foreign devil more than Deng or Mao ever did, and the hegemonic Americans were perfect for the part.

The new Chinese strategy came together in those confrontational first six months of 1994. As Bernstein and Munro write, "The hard-line nationalists, ignoring Deng Xiaoping's advice, believed that China could have it two ways—both preparing to confront the United States militarily and politically and at the same time benefiting from trade and investment ties with the Americans." Remarkably, the new strategy worked. Clinton announced in May 1994 that he was delinking trade and human rights, thus marking, as Bernstein and Munro note, "one of the most complete turnabouts in recent American diplomatic history." And the administration thereupon embarked on the very opposite course, embracing a policy of "engagement" (sometimes called "commercial engagement," sometimes called "constructive engagement") whose central premise is that the best way to shape Chinese behavior is through cooperation, not confrontation.

History will record that, in the increasingly difficult relationship between the reigning superpower and its rising competitor, this was a strategic shift of enormous significance. The business leaders who helped engineer the shift did not claim any larger motives beyond increasing the long-term profitability of their companies. In April 1994, Gates did not argue that allowing Microsoft to sell its wares in China would bring democracy to the Chinese people through the Internet or restrain China's regional and global ambitions. Quite the contrary. Standing shoulder to shoulder with Jiang Zemin, Gates publicly criticized any American "interference in [China's] internal affairs." The day after Clinton announced his new policy, the president of Kentucky Fried Chicken, John Cranor, announced a new plan to invest $200 million in China; but Cranor, like Gates, made no broad pronouncements about the benefits to either the Chinese people or to American security of selling fried chicken. "By permanently delinking human rights and economic investment," Cranor simply stated, "President Clinton has removed uncertainty from our China business."

It has been left to others to explain to the American people why selling chicken in Shanghai is good for America. In the age of "geoeconomics," as Martin Walker has observed, "the new virility symbols are exports and productivity and growth rates, and the great international encounters are the trade pacts of the economic superpowers." So it follows, just as Henry Cabot Lodge and Brooks Adams insisted a century ago, that the development of export markets abroad must be a primary goal of American foreign policy. Yet the arguments for making American foreign policy serve the interests of American business don't stop there. Trade with China, we are told, will also reduce the possibilities of conflict between the two nations, and it will gradually undermine the Chinese dictatorship as well.

Officials of the Clinton administration, especially those with international economic portfolios rather than international strategic ones, have been trumpeting this wonderful news for the past three years. In a recent article in *The New York Times*, for example, Laura D'Andrea Tyson, the former chairperson of the Council of Economic Advisers, insisted that "the best way to encourage reform and democratization is to strengthen China's trade and investment with the rest of the world." The bulk of American imports from China comes from the "private or quasi-private sectors," she argued. And it is upon the success of these sectors that "a developing Chinese middle class and China's continued evolution toward a more democratic system depends." The questions of politics have economic answers.

We are all economic determinists now, it seems. "How, then, does one promote freedom and democracy in China?" asks William H. Overholt, a political risk analyst for Bankers Trust in Hong Kong and one of the most effective spokesmen for commercial engagement with China. The answer, happily, is more American trade and American investment. "Spur economic development," Overholt advises. "Educated people will demand more freedom than uneducated people.... People in a complex, highly dif-

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ferentiated modern economy will have more freedom than in a peasant economy because the government will have more difficulty controlling them." To translate this very popular argument back into the original Marx, the political superstructure of dictatorship in China will change when the economic base changes. If you want to create a democracy, all you have to do is build a bourgeoisie. Entrepreneurs of China, unite!

Such claims for the magical powers of American business abroad are so extravagant that they would have made Calvin Coolidge blush. Even in the nineteenth century, the spiritual enlightenment of the heathen Chinese was supposed to come from the Christian missionaries, not from the exporters of cotton goods. Now we can be grateful to learn that American business abroad enriches *and* reforms. Why are these arguments so persuasive to so many? In part, it is because the vast majority of educated Americans are persuaded that history, for all intents and purposes, really has ended. They can no longer imagine war between great powers or the possibility of a successful tyranny. (On March 7, the president himself, in a gaffe of Gerald Ford-like proportions, spoke about "Russia and China, the two great former Communist powers.") This, in turn, has transformed their view of the way the world works and the way history unfolds. The constant anxiety of the cold war, when the individual decisions of individual presidents and secretaries-general were always thought to be freighted with the risk of instant global catastrophe, when, in other words, the "contingency of history" loomed large, has given way to a dreamy sense of the sheer inevitability of it all. Large and impersonal social forces, transnational flows of money and ideas, computers and satellites, are what make the world go round, not political leaders and generals and the orders that they give.

The recent past has been reinterpreted to fit this pervasive sense of historical inevitability. The many complex and unpredictable factors that came together to produce the collapse of the Soviet Union—the assassination of a Soviet puppet ruler in Afghanistan; the pressure of the Reagan arms buildup; the sudden death of Yuri Andropov; the unpredictable errors of Mikhail Gorbachev—have all melted into one long causal chain of economic determinism. The common account of the Soviet Union's demise is now pleasingly simple: it was the beauty of capitalism that killed the beast. Politics was only an expression of economics.

As with the recent past, so with the near future. China will be a democracy

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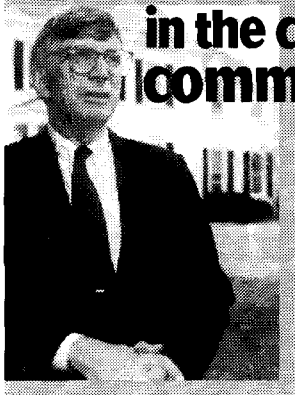

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by 2015, writes Henry Rowen, usually an astute and hardheaded analyst, and in the present mood this prediction becomes for serious people a guide to their thinking about what to do about China. Thoughtful pundits even repeat the specified date, 2015, as if it had real meaning. It certainly has obvious implications for American foreign policy. For, if China will be a democracy by 2015, then the best thing for Americans to do is sit back and enjoy the show. And by all means make as much money as possible in the meantime, especially since making some Americans rich is part of the chain reaction that will make many millions of Chinese free.

Not since the nineteenth century has international trade been so exalted as the single cure for all of humanity's most persistent maladies, from tyranny and oppression to international disputes and war. We forget, because the theory was so discredited by the two world wars of the twentieth century, that the free-trade doctrine of the nineteenth century was for most of its adherents not about making money, but about achieving world peace. Nations that traded with each other would settle their disputes by arbitration not war, the theory ran, because war was bad for business. Trade brought people of different nations together, and more contact among peoples inevitably meant less friction between nations. For the disciples of so-called Manchester liberalism, "paradise was an international bazaar," as the historian Geoffrey Blainey has put it. "The fortresses of peace were those institutions and inventions which promoted the exchange of ideas and commodities: parliaments, international conferences, the popular press ... the penny postage stamp, railways, submarine telegraphs, three-funneled ocean liners, and the Manchester cotton exchange."

It was a harsh lesson for economic liberals when it turned out that the same wealth that the industrial revolution and freer international trade created, the same inventions that brought nations into closer communication, also made possible a more brutal, more destructive, and more total form of war. The adherents of Manchester liberalism had made a striking misjudgment about the changing nature of their world. As Blainey has explained, "most of the changes which were hailed as causes of peace in the nineteenth century were probably more the effects of peace." The ease with which ideas, people and commodities crossed borders, the perception that economics mattered more than geopolitics, that traders were more important than warriors: these were all by-products of a stable international security order which the Manchester liberals took for granted, but which was already coming apart. As World War I showed, the allegedly unbreakable bonds of economic interest snapped in an instant when the armies of powerful nations moved.

The credence given to claims about the transformative power of economics today derives from a similar misjudgment about what undergirds the present international order. The greatest power on earth, in international and domestic affairs, remains the power of naked force and, when that force is unleashed, by tyrants against their people or by one nation against another, the web of economics is an ineffectual restraint. We must be careful not to confuse cause and effect again. The peace and the stability created and protected by American power over the past five decades have made possible the present explosion of international commerce and communication, not vice versa. The technological innovations of recent years are no more a guarantor of peace than the telegraph cable or the steamship were a century ago. And the communications revolution is still more the product than the producer of democracy.

Now, as ever, the wealth and the power produced by trade and economic development can be used for bad ends as well as for good. China provides the perfect example of this. Given the clear ambitions of the current generation of leaders, today's economic boom can be expected to fuel tomorrow's military buildup. The technology of civilian airplane manufacture, eagerly provided by McDonnell Douglas, can be used to build military aircraft, too. The technology of satellite communication, eagerly provided by Motorola and other American firms, can be used for government surveillance.

And if the wealth created in the Chinese economic miracle sows seeds of future political pressures from a new entrepreneurial class, that same wealth also provides the Beijing government and its army with the muscle to rebuff internal and external pressures for political reform. As Bernstein and Munro astutely argue, "trade with the West, including with Microsoft Corporation, has a double edge. It brings in practices and ideas that ought to lead to political reform. But it also enhances the power of the regime to resist and suppress political reform and to force other countries to drop their demands for it."

In 1996, China managed to block any consideration of its human rights practices by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. The American corporate community played an important part in that international campaign. As Bernstein and Munro bluntly point out, "a figure like Gates, standing side by side with China's president and the head of the Communist Party so that the two of them together can accuse the West of interfering in China's internal affairs, reflects, not an inclination toward long-term change in China, but a power to resist that change."

For all the talk of the inevitability of China's democratic transformation, and thus the inevitable convergence of American and Chinese interests, even a cursory survey of Sinologists reveals that little consensus exists, and what does exist does not support this rosy prediction. The most common prediction for China's future is not, to put it mildly, Jeffersonian. China is headed, rather, toward a kind of bureaucratic authoritarian capitalism, a mostly arbitrary rule by "princelings" or "cadre capitalists." Some scholars expect the current trend toward the decentralization of power to continue, though without bringing anything like political pluralism. Others expect a "neo-conservative" attempt to bring power back to the center. And there are optimists, too: Kenneth Lieberthal has imagined a more open, more decentralized, but yet more militarily powerful China.

As Arthur Waldron has pointed out, however, all these prognostications are little more than variations of straight-line projections from the present to the future. Waldron reminds us of Sovietologist Jerry Hough's "eminently reasonable" and in retrospect embarrassingly inane prognosis for the Soviet Union, made in 1979: "Any future evolution is highly likely to retain the framework of the present system in one sense or another." The truth is, we are not permitted to foresee the course of China's evolution, any more than we were permitted to see the fate of the Soviet Union before it was upon us. Still, consider this historical paradox. If the idea had taken hold in 1979 that the Soviet Union would collapse by 1992, would the West have conducted the kinds of policies which we now know were prerequisite to that outcome? Might it not also be the case that prophecies of China's inevitable democratization, by 2015 or by any other date, must be similarly self-defeating?

Economists—or more to the point, economicists—such as Tyson ask us to ignore the fact that their engagement strategy is not actually working, that it "may yield few if any short-run improvements" in Chinese behavior. Even if progress with China has been "disappoint-

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ingly slow in the short run," Tyson insists, "we are on the right track for the long run." To appreciate American business with China, it seems, you need a Chinese sense of time. But what if the long run is not twenty years, but fifty years or a hundred years? Could we not find ourselves in conflict with China—over Taiwan, for instance—long before Tyson's benevolent dialectic of history has a chance to show its stuff?

It is a safe bet that the American businesses who are playing such an enormous role in shaping American policy toward China today do not care one way or another. As a senior vice president of Boeing explained, what these businesses seek in China is "predictability." And this desire for reliable and expanding access to the China market has made these businessmen, and the exalted former government officials they pay for "consulting," effective servants of the Chinese government within the American policy debate. In April 1996, two years after Clinton's embrace of "engagement," China punished Boeing by buying $1.5 billion worth of airplanes from the European firm Airbus. Prime Minister Li Peng publicly explained that Europeans "do not attach political strings to cooperation with China, unlike the Americans who arbitrarily resort to the threat of sanctions or the use of sanctions." Boeing responded by redoubling its lobbying efforts in Washington. As Bernstein and Munro report, "Boeing seems willing to do almost anything for the Chinese government to hold on to" its share of the China market.

The American public might be surprised to learn that this China market is proportionally as much a myth today as it was a century ago. In a century the share of American exports to China has gone from about 2 percent to about, well, 2 percent. The United States exported $12 billion worth of goods last year to China, less than it exported to the Netherlands, to Hong Kong, or to Belgium. Meanwhile, the U.S. trade deficit with China is climbing rapidly. Four years ago, Overholt wrote that the 1992 deficit of $19 billion was "clearly unsustainable." Now that deficit is $40 billion.

In the 1990s as in the 1890s, all the great profits of the China trade are yet to be realized. It is the "staggering economic potential" of China that the experts still point to, and the numbers they throw around still boggle: "$30 billion worth of telecommunications could be sold in the next five years"; "over the next three years, American auto parts sellers have extraordinary opportunities in a market valued at more than $29 billion." The authors of those phrases, former U.S. Ambassador to China James Lilley and former Commerce Department official Wendell L. Willkie II, are among the more sensible analysts of U.S.-China relations, but even they cannot avoid repeating almost verbatim the dire warnings of Henry Cabot Lodge, oblivious to the fact that we have been down this road before. "[A]ggressive pursuit of [China's] huge emerging market," they declare, has become "a national imperative.... If the United States does not take the fullest advantage of the enormous business possibilities in China, American industries may suffer a long-term disability relative to their foreign competitors."

And even Bernstein and Munro, although they see the danger posed by this kind of thinking, cannot quite bring themselves to oppose the current policy of protecting China's trade status regardless of Chinese behavior at home or abroad. Indeed, aside from their very important suggestions that the United States should maintain a strong military presence in East Asia and strengthen its security relationship with Japan, Bernstein and Munro conclude their appropriately alarmist book with soporifically timid policy recommendations. If China breaks its commitments to respect the rule of law in Hong Kong, Bernstein and Munro suggest that the United States should "protest loudly and vigorously." Troubled by Chinese repression of Tibet? Bernstein and Munro recommend, in state-of-the-art State Department prose, that the United States "maintain a respectful relationship with those who represent the aspirations of Tibetans to practice their way of life and to maintain their culture." Bernstein and Munro would consider suspending China's Most Favored Nation status, but only in retaliation for unfair Chinese trade practices—thus suggesting, like the businessmen they criticize, that it is worth risking a trade war to promote American exports, not to promote Chinese freedoms.

Most surprisingly, in a book that seeks to prove that Chinese leaders aim at hegemony in Asia and regard the United States as an "international archenemy"—in a book called *The Coming Conflict with China*—Bernstein and Munro argue vehemently against a strategy of "containment," on the grounds that such a policy would evince toward China a certain "distrust and hostility" on our part. This book by two authors shows symptoms of schizophrenia. After 100 pages of railing against corporate chiefs and Henry Kissinger for their callous indifference to Chinese oppression, Bernstein and Munro themselves argue, in the sterile tradition of foreign policy "realism," that Chi-

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nese internal behavior is neither our business nor our concern—except insofar as "taking positions" on human rights is "America's way of keeping faith with its democratic ideals." On page 205 they argue that an appropriate goal of U.S. policy should be to "induce China to become more democratic and to respect the human rights of its own people," and on page 211 they write that "the United States has essentially no power to force China, or anybody else, to respect *what we regard* as inalienable rights." (My italics.)

They were right the first time (and the third and the fifth). The United States has an interest in a democratic China, and not just because clamoring for it will make us feel better about ourselves. Only a blind man, or a realist, could fail to see that the looming confrontation between the United States and China has a powerful ideological component. The international democratic order that we uphold is inherently threatening to Chinese dictators clinging to power amid the rapid economic changes that Deng unleashed. They must either force us to change (or make an exception to) the rules of that international order, or they must succumb to it. Chinese military officials declared in 1993 that "because China and the United States have longstanding conflicts over their different ideologies, social systems, and foreign policies, it will prove impossible to fundamentally improve Sino-U.S. relations." They are right. Something has to give. Should it be us?

That is the kind of question that serious American strategists need to confront, even as the apostles of "geoeconomics" preach merrily about the obsolescence of traditional strategy and the miracles of commerce and communication. The fundamental facts of international relations have not changed that much in a century, the end of the cold war notwithstanding. Then as now, the United States has broad strategic and moral interests which cannot be pursued on the well-tailored backs of American businessmen. Although corporate leaders can be expected to ask the government to help them out abroad, it is still the job of our political leaders sometimes to say no. The unwillingness of recent American governments to keep business interests in their place has become dangerous. Bernstein and Munro, for all their confusion, have performed a vital service in sending up a flare. Maybe we Terranovas will get the message in time.

ROBERT KAGAN is the author of *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977-1990* (Free Press) and a contributing editor at *The Weekly Standard*.

Sexing The Jewry

BY ROBERT ALTER

Gut Symmetries by Jeanette Winterson

(Knopf, 223 pp., $22)

This is the sixth novel by Jeanette Winterson, a young British writer who has frequently been celebrated on both sides of the Atlantic as the bright new light of English fiction. She has happily embraced this judgment: on at least two occasions, when asked to choose the best work of fiction to have appeared in England during the previous year, she confessed that she could think of nothing that equaled the richness of her own most recent book.

But one should not hold a writer's self-promotion against her. (In the words of Hillel the Elder, "If I am not for myself, who is for me?") Jeanette Winterson is a writer who has a genuine passion about the revelatory experience of art—as attested by her recent volume of essays, *Art Objects*—a genuine passion about language and a serious reflectiveness about the complex moral circuitries of carnal passion. Occasionally, all of this coalesces in a moment of illumination, as when Alice, one of the three protagonist narrators of *Gut Symmetries*, comments on the narcissistic gratification of becoming the lover of her male lover's wife: "Desiring her I felt my own desirability. It was an act of power but not power over her. I was my own conquest." There are also fleeting passages that are poetically evocative, like this glimpse of New York in the penultimate paragraph of the novel: "The city is a scintilla, light to light, quartz and neon of the Brooklyn Bridge and the incandescence of the stars." An energy of satiric observation enlivens her writing and can generate shrewd comedy—when, that is, it is undistorted by tendentiousness, as in her relentless war against what I suppose we must now call heterosexual marriage.

Winterson's hostility to marriage is a symptom of her recurrent inclination to skew reality in the interest of some preconceived ideas. In Winterson's novels, married women, in contradistinction to women in same-sex couples, consistently find themselves trapped in a living hell, and it always seems to be the fault of the man, who is variously callous, cruel, careeristic, indifferent and sexually unfaithful. The husband in *Gut Symmetries* literally eats his wife alive, which makes him the perfect realization of a metaphor implicit in her earlier fiction. Of course, there are such one-sided marital disasters; but reason suggests that lesbian couples, given the intractable stuff of human nature, have their own pathologies. In any case, observation (not to speak of introspection) would indicate that most soured relationships are the fault in varying degree of both parties. If there is a principal culprit, it could as easily be the woman as the man. What is proffered as a vision of the human world, in Winterson's novels, is sometimes no more than a special pleading about it.

There are, as I have intimated, local virtues in Winterson's writing, but the problem is that they never quite cohere into a compelling artistic whole. *Gut Symmetries*, which is not one of her most successful books, offers an instructive object-lesson as to why this should be so. Let me say first that, despite the plot of triangular desire (which includes an episode of cannibalism and a brink-of-death experience), this is not really a novel about eroticism, illicit or otherwise, and it is by no means a sensationalistic book. Winterson's real concern is with desire as an element of something much bigger—a visionary perception of the human condition, of the small but precious purchase that our transient intensities of living have in the infinite expanses of the starry spaces. Thus the novel's last sentence: "Whatever it is that pulls the pin, that hurls you past the boundaries of your own life into a brief and total beauty, even for a moment, it is enough."

The earnest vagueness of that concluding statement is a symptom of the underlying deficiency of Winterson's work. She aspires to profundity, but the metaphysical concepts that she invokes are scarcely more than metaphorical conceits. Her language too often visibly strains to be

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rich and mysterious, and her characters suffer from a lack of specific gravity as realized individuals, which makes them unpersuasive as vehicles for her philosophic or visionary alms.

Both Alice and Jove, the man with whom she takes up at the beginning of the novel, are theoretical physicists, and there are repeated lucubrations on quantum mechanics, relativity, black holes, string theory and the like. The title itself is meant to be a resonant pun, referring at once to the symmetries of visceral experience among the three sexual partners and to an acronym current among physicists, Grand Unified Theories. But, at least as far as this layman can make out, the concepts of theoretical physics are treated as no more than loose and fanciful analogies for the preoccupations of a very literary person. Since, for example, in quantum experiments "particles can hold positions contradictory and simultaneous," the narrator can grandly conclude that "in a quantum universe, heaven and hell are simply [sic] parallel possibilities." In similar fashion, precise correspondences are proposed (Winterson is not the first to do so) between the highly paradoxical view of reality of the kabbalah and the paradoxes of modern physics.

I am not competent to judge the accuracy of the scientific ideas invoked, though a few obvious errors make me wonder about the rest. The Greeks did not seriously think the world was flat (the scientists of Alexandria worked out a measurement for the Earth's circumference accurate within a few hundred miles), and it is not true that Newton's theories "remained triumphant and unchallenged" until the publication of Einstein's two epochal papers in 1905 (decades earlier Riemann had conceived curved space and Maxwell's equations had anticipated electromagnetic waves). As to language, though Winterson can on occasion write very well, there is altogether too much flexing of stylistic muscle, often producing grotesque effects. Hyperbole predominates: "He crying in salt waterfalls, she scattering her tears like gunshot." "I was gargoyled with grief. A stretched taunted thing. A waterspout of misery." And this of a character who thinks she is about to die: "I seem to be tumbling over myself, ready to tunnel out of the womb of the world, my hands and feet bouncing off its warm wall."

The excess of that last clause is the watermark of Winterson's overwrought style. She tries to impart to the characters a terrific intensity lacking in their inner lives through the sheer energy of metaphoric invention. Or, to state this in terms of her relation to her medium rather than her characters, she exerts a certain violence of figuration in order to affirm her originality. She does this in order to stay two steps ahead of the spectre of literary cliché, which in fact holds a hidden attraction for her, as in this shopworn romantic image of despair: "Where was I in the night where two dogs howled at the moon and a ruined tower reflected down at me?" or in the threadbare lyricism of sentences such as "the world is still sleeping in its coverlet of stars." To the extrusion of the poetic effect through hyperbole, one must add the little explosions of alliteration that punctuate the narrative, in which, as if in a Nabokovian language gone mad, the sheer repetition of an initial consonant is meant to signify vigor, imagination and wit: "Yes, look at her, bunioned, bulbous, hair in bulrush rolls, buttheaded, butterhearted and tenacious as a buckaroo."

The ultimate problem with these gestures of style and these conjurings of concepts is that the characters themselves have a cartoonish flatness—it is Winterson's most postmodern trait—that makes it hard to accept them as agencies in which the great issues of time and eternity and the poetic fire of Olympus are engaged. Concomitantly, literary allusion, which is the essential lexicon of the language of literature, dwindles here to the flat mention of antecedent works. *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moby-Dick*, Whitman and Homer are adduced, but with no resonance of imaginative relationship, intertextuality itself having lost its bite. The link of the characters with cultural, historical and geographical realities is as tenuous as their correspondence to literary analogues and as thin as the realization of their inner lives.

A case in point is the peculiar Jewishness of Stella, who is Jove's wife and becomes Alice's lover. Her mother is a German Christian, her father an Austrian Jew, antiquarian bookdealer and student of the kabbalah. The kabbalistic connection, on which Winterson has done some homework, is important to her for furthering the metaphysical concerns of the novel. But, in order to make Stella's father a kabbalist, the novelist must also represent him as an Orthodox Jew, donning prayer shawl and tefillin for his daily morning worship and consorting with ultra-Orthodox diamond merchants. The problem is that Winterson has not really bothered to find out anything about how Orthodox Jews behave. They don't marry German *shiksas* and continue to observe their orthodoxy punctiliously. They never pray, as the father here is said to do, at high Reform congregations such as "the Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue." (And they would never use that incorrect definite article.) They never use "Abel" as a first name. And where a people, or a place, or an individual personage, is not imagined in the density of its particular existence, gaping holes are left, and through them the ever-lurking cliché comes flying into the world of the novel, as in this Jewish credo of Stella's:

> I come from a people to whom the invisible world is everyday present. A people for whom there is no death though death has followed them across history and continents. I come from a people who hope against hope, whose melancholy is the outer garment of their mirth. In their celebrations and in their mournings, the spirit is the same.

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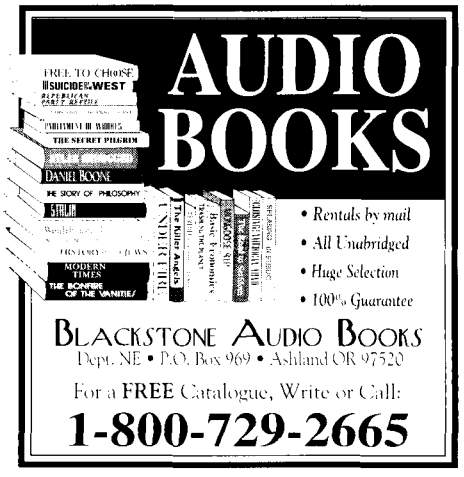
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The empty sentimentality and the facile mystification of these lines hardly require comment. What strikes me is how neatly they complement the hostile stereotypes in Winterson's fiction. (The Jewish physician-husband in *Written on the Body* is a compound of these stereotypes.) That is, if you denigrate whole classes of human beings and human relationships, there is likely to be a compensatory reflex, in which you raise certain classes of people or kinds of relationships up, and attribute to them an intrinsic and unique aura or spiritual power. (In her acknowledgments to *Gut Symmetries*, Winterson thanks her "Jewish friends who taught me their love and mystery.") And it is not really so surprising that the same group may be alternately the subject of hostility and sentimentality.

Jeanette Winterson does not always writes such hackneyed stuff; but her worst writing is a symptom of why she is not better than she is. She has a flare for language, and there are moments of genuine feeling in her work. They are perhaps most strikingly evident in the story of a love wrenchingly lost at the end of *Written on the Body*, a novel that appeared in 1992. But she is too prone to reach for the shortcut to profundity and intensity. Too often she prefers rhetorical gesture and conceptual name-dropping to the arduous, deeply interesting business of imagining character, idea and circumstance.

ROBERT ALTER's most recent book is *Genesis: Translation and Commentary* (W.W. Norton).

Beyond Pangloss

BY PETER BERKOWITZ

Leibniz' Universal Jurisprudence: Justice as the Charity of the Wise by Patrick Riley

(Harvard University Press, 338 pp., $39.95)

In the final lines of his introduction to this engaging and elegant study of the moral and political philosophy of Leibniz, Patrick Riley offers a startling reason for re-examining the thought of the great but neglected early modern philosopher: "it is possible, if admittedly not very likely, that Leibniz is simply right." One can almost hear the derisive chuckles and see the rolling eyes with which the mere posing of such a possibility will be greeted by many readers in the academy. The notion that any thinker, let alone a speculative metaphysician and a rationalist theologian such as Leibniz, is "right," and "simply right," will appear, in the proudly anti-foundational universe of professional political philosophy, as quaint, or worse.

Among students of morality and politics, the contemporary inhospitableness to metaphysics, or speculation about the character of reality, reflects a convergence of opinions from many quarters. John Rawls has famously argued for a liberal conception of justice that is "political, not metaphysical." The virtue of such a conception, in his view, is that it can be articulated and defended without taking sides on controversial questions about first principles or theoretical foundations. Jürgen Habermas, perhaps the leading contemporary European social and political theorist, goes further, expounding a "discourse ethics" and a proceduralist or "deliberative" view of democracy that he claims is "postmetaphysical," in the sense that it takes sides against the idea of a human nature and other philosophical foundations. The social sciences continue to be governed by a positivism that distinguishes sharply between facts that are knowable and values—that is, beliefs about the right and the good—that are subjective and not subject to rational vindication. And the most popular flavors of recent seasons, postmodernism and pragmatism, are no less hostile to questions about first principles and the grounds of the right and the good. Metaphysics has no friend in an "incredulity toward metanarratives," as postmodernism has been defined, and the Deweyan democrats, led by Richard Rorty, who has done so much to bring pragmatism up to date, will also have little use for it, and they are interested only in what is useful.

All their differences notwithstanding, the dominant methods or approaches to moral and political inquiry in the academy are one in banishing metaphysical speculation about the right and the good from the realm of serious thought. Like all orthodoxies, today's orthodoxy imposes costs on the spirit of free inquiry. It lulls the mind into thinking that the study of moral and political life can be theory-free. It peremptorily rules out of order an entire class of questions about the sources of the moral life. And, in advance of actual inquiry, it makes it impossible to account for, or to mount a reasoned defense of, certain widely cherished moral principles and political ideals.

Consider, for example, the idea of justice as universal benevolence. It is a conception of justice that has come to be inseparable from the liberal mind (and it happens to lie at the heart of Leibniz's "universal jurisprudence"). As Charles Taylor has argued, a commitment to justice understood as universal benevolence runs deep in the contemporary culture of the West. This commitment is manifest in widespread acceptance of the familiar idea that all human beings must be treated with equal respect without regard to race, class, sex, culture or religion; in the numerous declarations of universal human rights; and in the many humanitarian efforts to fight poverty and to relieve suffering not only at home but around the globe. But, as Taylor has also pointed out, this pervasive commitment to equal respect for all vastly exceeds our capacity to explain or rationally defend it. Most of us do not doubt the existence of human rights, but few of us have the slightest idea of where such rights come from or why they are worth respecting.

This disparity between the force of our belief in universal human dignity and our power to articulate good reasons for it is not merely theoretically interesting. It is also a source of practical concern, since it invites its own forms of zealotry, hypocrisy and enslavement. In the absence of the guidance that comes from firm principles and secure standards, there is a heightened risk that those endowed with a passion for justice will feel at liberty to pursue ends and to adopt means that fail to respect the humanity of other human beings. At the same time, the absence of good grounds for shared values creates wonderful opportunities for cynicism, as people come to casually profess ideals that no longer serve as reasons for sacrifice or even as motives for action. Worst of all, perhaps, the articulate defenders of inarticulacy in matters of fundamental importance foster a conviction of the groundlessness of the good that threatens to reduce us in our own eyes to slaves of chance and necessity.

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The opinion, popularized by Richard Rorty, that metaphysical speculation has its roots in a primitive and perverse impulse arising out of alienation from ordinary language and estrangement from everyday life, is not a timeless truth; it is, at best, a diagnosis of restricted reach, applicable to certain thinkers in a particular time and a particular place who have lost their way in their own fog of concepts. Fortunately, there is a more plausible understanding of metaphysics, one that is more faithful to the ambiguities inscribed in ordinary language and the elusive and multivalent experiences of everyday life. On this view, metaphysics is nothing other than the final stages in the attempt to pursue the why? as far as the argument requires it, as far as the mind will take one; and it has its natural origins in the child's desire to understand—in his enviable and easily lost ability to perceive the world as the vast and mysterious place that it is.

It is Patrick Riley's contention that Leibniz is to be admired because he saw so clearly that justice needs a reasoned defense, and that the reasoned defense of justice ultimately depends on an understanding of the human soul and the cosmos of which the soul is a part. And Riley also honors Leibniz for his tenacious and systematic effort to provide a rational defense of a particular conception of justice: justice understood as universal benevolence. This is not all there was to Leibniz, of course, and Riley weaves into his account of Leibniz's universal jurisprudence an appreciation of Leibniz's achievements in a remarkable range of roles and fields.

A groundbreaking mathematician and scientist who, in 1673, in his late 20s, was named a member of the Royal Society, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was trained in law and served as a court official, diplomat and official historian of the Electorate of Hanover. In addition, he engaged in a voluminous correspondence (which Riley draws on extensively), much of which dealt with his political hopes for the reunification of Christendom under the joint authority of the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. But it is Leibniz's metaphysics—expounded most prominently in the *Theodicy* (1710), a vindication of God's justice, and the *Monadology* (1714), an account of substance and the soul—that lies at the heart of Riley's study of Leibniz's universal jurisprudence. One reason for this, as Riley emphasizes, is that Leibniz's metaphysics undergirds his moral and political theory. But there is another reason, in some tension with the first. It is Riley's claim that Leibniz, from beginning to end, was a moralist whose moral intentions directed, and in some cases determined, his metaphysical speculations.

In seeking to create afresh an appreciation of Leibniz's philosophy, Riley faces an uphill battle. And this is not only because of the anti-metaphysical prejudices of the day. Bertrand Russell, who devoted an important early book to certain logical aspects of Leibniz's metaphysical speculations, characterized Leibniz's social thought as a "mass of inconsistencies" and accused Leibniz of "disreputable subterfuges" in defense of his royalist patrons. Hegel, in his history of philosophy, had derided Leibniz's claim that great evil must be understood as necessary in the best of all possible worlds. And Leibniz has the dubious distinction of being the only major modern philosopher to have had his central doctrines mocked in a masterpiece of literature. In *Candide*, Voltaire wickedly ridicules Leibniz by reducing his philosophy to a handful of metaphysical clichés and putting them into the mouth of that fatuous old fool Dr. Pangloss, who offers them up to explain, or to explain away, all misfortune great and small.

Riley scrupulously reports all this, and goes out of his way to give Leibniz's critics their due. Indeed, it is a tribute to his own sympathetic exposition that Riley may well outdo Leibniz's previous critics by bringing into full view and meticulously inspecting certain structural weaknesses in his thought. Riley's intellectual portrait of Leibniz amounts to a rather severe critique of the internal coherence of his system. But that is hardly the end of the story. Riley maintains, staunchly and persuasively, that the moral vision that animates Leibniz's system is itself generous and benevolent and deserving of serious consideration.

In what does this moral vision consist? It is formed, Riley argues, by a synthesis of the Christian or Pauline doctrine that charity, or love for the well-being of others, is the highest of the virtues, with the Platonic doctrine of "eternal moral verities" that are intelligible to the mind's eye. The eternal and unchanging principles of justice, which Leibniz conceived of as connected by a kind of geometric necessity, are as binding on God in His perfection, in Leibniz's view, as they are on human beings in our imperfection. To hold otherwise, Leibniz argued, and to believe that God creates the principles of justice, was to turn God into a tyrant who ruled the world by arbitrary will and overpowering force. God, whose necessary existence and complete perfection Leibniz thought could be demonstrated by reason, is both the wise architect and the just monarch of the world. Indeed, He rules the world justly through His wise construction of it. His love or wise charity for His creatures consists in fashioning, out of the infinity of possible universes and in accordance with the eternal principles of justice, the best of all possible worlds.

As all experience attests, however, the world in which we find ourselves is full of imperfection and evil. But this imperfection and evil is, in Leibniz's account, the result of the limitation and the partiality that are necessary features of all that God brings into existence. Things cannot be other than they are because God, in fashioning each simple substance or monad, including the rational substances or monads called souls, determines in advance all actions and events and organizes them in accordance with a pre-established harmony that makes this on the whole the best possible world. And yet divine determination does not destroy human freedom. It is, quite the contrary, freedom's source and justification. Divine determination makes freedom possible by endowing every human being with the capacity to rise above impulse and appetite. It gives freedom a purpose, which is the actualization of justice.

Although he insists that the destiny of a particular individual is, or will be, inscribed in the soul that God fashions, Leibniz nevertheless argues that human beings are morally responsible, because our beliefs and our actions proceed from internal principles constitutive of our souls. Human beings are monads, or substances of the highest order, by virtue of our ability to know and to judge and to organize our lives in accordance with what is good. Each human being is a unique individual representing the universe from a singular perspective, yet every man and woman is equally bound by the eternal and uncreated principles of justice.

The "crowning element" of Leibniz's political theory, according to Riley, is the "idea of a 'just' universal monarchy under a 'wisely charitable' God." The primary and distinctive focus of Leibniz's universal jurisprudence is not the art of ruling, or the causes that preserve and destroy actual regimes, or the structure of government and the formal procedures for the adjudication of controversies; it is the moral and political relation in which human beings stand to God. Its most radical implication, politically, is the depreciation of law in favor of charity and mercy; or, rather, the transformation of justice into a law of love. Leibniz's view differs from Plato's, according to whom justice is a virtue of the soul that is most fully ex-

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ercised not in looking out for the well-being of all others but in loving knowledge wisely. It differs from the Christian understanding, which holds that charity depends not on the perfection of the intellect but on the purity of the heart. And it differs from contemporary liberal and democratic perspectives, which, though they take universal benevolence as an ideal, feel no compulsion to provide rational grounds for their belief in the autonomy of human agents or to explain how human dignity is possible in a materialist universe that seems to exclude the incorporeal and rational substances that Leibniz calls souls.

As rational substances, human beings belong to the City of God, and, as Leibniz states in the final section of the *Monadology*, "this truly universal monarchy, is a moral world within the natural world, and is the most exalted and the most divine of the works of God." Under the perfect government that prevails in the City of God, all good deeds are rewarded, all wicked acts are punished, and virtue consists in discerning and taking pleasure in the perfection that each individual is capable of achieving, and in learning to love the world as an expression of God's justice or wise charity.

Summaries are inescapably caricatures. This is especially true in the case of Leibniz, a summary of whose thought really can put one in mind of Pangloss. Still, as Riley demonstrates in rich detail, much of the interest of Leibniz's philosophy is owed to his perseverance in seeking to reconcile essential but antagonistic elements. Indeed, Riley's exposition is in large measure a patient examination of the "grave difficulties" that haunt Leibniz's system.

One such "painful" difficulty concerns human freedom and divine determination. After thoroughly exploring the matter from many angles, Riley concludes that Leibniz does not provide a plausible account of how human spontaneity and autonomy, which are critical to Leibniz's defense of the moral life, can coexist with God's authorization of all of our opinions and acts. Another "troublesome" difficulty concerns evil and God's justice. Riley's judgment, following exhaustive examination of the sources, is that Leibniz fails to give a satisfactory explanation as to how the creation of a world full of evil and imperfection is consistent with God's wise charity. These difficulties, needless to say, are not minor. They haunt the whole of Leibniz's metaphysical enterprise, as well as his articulation of a universal jurisprudence.

There is at least one difficulty that Riley forces into the light of day without stating it clearly and with force. In expounding Leibniz's universal jurisprudence, Riley on occasion speaks of Leibniz's "derivation" of morality from natural reason. But, in so doing, Riley uses a technical term in what his own analysis suggests is a very loose fashion. As Riley discreetly indicates, in critical cases the more precise characterization of the movement in Leibniz's philosophy may well be the imputation of roots in natural reason to his own favored opinions about God's justice and the eternal order: "The Preface to the *Theodicy* is, again, a kind of 'religion within the limits of reason alone'—even if reason reveals rather more to Leibniz than it ever did to Kant."

Riley, in short, leaves little doubt that Leibniz never manages to make his arguments consistent and his system coherent. And, in the conclusion of his book, Riley goes even further, ruling out in passing the very possibility of any successful renewal of Leibniz's universal jurisprudence: "In many ways Leibnizian 'wise charity' is the last flowering (or last gasp) of a long and distinguished Graeco-Roman-Christian tradition which was to be definitively overturned by Hume, Rousseau, and Kant no more than a half-century after Leibniz's death." Riley seems to be saying that Enlightenment thought, culminating in Kant's critical philosophy, dealt a death blow to the philosophy of classical antiquity as well as to theology based on biblical faith.

Thus, at the end of his book Riley definitively sets aside the suggestive possibility with which he began, that Leibniz's teaching was "simply right." And yet he stays with his hero. Riley seems strangely unfazed by his categorical judgment that Leibniz's views are wrong in ways that place his system beyond hope of repair. Riley is content to commend Leibniz's system as a pleasant dream that could never have been real, but can somehow still edify: "Who can doubt that the world would be better if Leibnizian universal jurisprudence were in place—if every rational substance in the universe not only refrained from harm but rejoiced in the 'perfection' of others? Who can doubt that the world would be best if wise charity and universal benevolence actually prevailed? Only an ungenerous heart would fail to be moved by so generous a moral vision."

Riley, it seems, admires Leibniz's aspirations more than his arguments, and loves the morality at which Leibniz's philosophical system aims more than the system of philosophy. But doesn't Riley's confession finally confirm the contemporary anti-foundational prejudice—a restatement, really, of a very old accusation—that accounts of justice built on views about God or "eternal moral verities" are more wishes or dreams than serious things? And does not Riley's final verdict, precisely by virtue of his sympathy for metaphysical speculation and his manifest love for Leibniz's universal jurisprudence, leave metaphysics, the exploration of first things and fundamental principles, more exposed and more vulnerable than before? After such a vindication, who needs a refutation?

Riley himself provides an obscure and perhaps inadvertent clue to a different sort of vindication in developing one of the guiding themes of his book: Leibniz's deep debt to Plato. In line with the tradition of Christian neo-Platonism that Leibniz followed, Riley equates Platonism with the view that moral and political life should be governed by the wise in light of "eternal moral verities." In this connection, Riley emphasizes that "Leibniz's devotion to the doctrine of Plato's *Euthyphro* is clear." What Leibniz (and Riley) takes to be the clear doctrine of Plato's dialogue on piety is that the just is not good because it is divinely willed. The truth is just the reverse. It is because the just is good that it is willed by the gods or God.

But there are reasons to doubt that this is really the doctrine of the *Euthyphro* or any other Platonic dialogue. That Riley himself harbors such a doubt is reflected in the variety of ways in which he refers to Leibniz's so-called Platonism. Often Riley refers to Platonism without qualification; but sometimes he places Platonism and Platonic in inverted commas, alluding to Leibniz's "demi-Platonism," or speaking of a "quasi-Platonic tendency" in Leibniz's thought. Perhaps Riley's occasional and inconsistent qualifications reflect an anxiety about designating as Plato's doctrine certain select propositions that occur at discrete moments in extended conversations between Socrates and various and sundry interlocutors.

This question about the proper way to read a Platonic dialogue is not idle pedantry. What is at stake, in fact, is an alternative and perhaps more fruitful understanding of metaphysics. Metaphysical speculation in Plato's *Euthyphro* occurs in a context that suggests the complexity and the elusiveness of the very thing that Socrates and Euthyphro seek, which is the definition of piety. In the marketplace in front of the law courts, where he has come to tend to the indictment brought against him for impiety and corrupting the young, Socrates happens to meet Euthyphro, a young man flush with pious zeal on his way to

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initiate a lawsuit against his father, who, under exceedingly extenuating circumstances, has brought about the death of a drunken laborer. When Socrates questions the propriety of proceeding against one's father, Euthyphro rebukes him, asserting that the only relevant question is whether the killer has acted justly. Euthyphro concedes that well-established practice requires that charges of murder be brought by members of the victim's family, and that most people will regard prosecution of one's father on behalf of a hired hand as the height of impiety, but he insists that he understands the will of the gods more plainly and precisely than most.

It is this presumption that Socrates questions in the dialogue, and defeats. First, he shows Euthyphro that it is difficult to infer what the gods think about justice, for careful attention to tradition reveals that the gods quarrel bitterly about the just, the noble and the good. Then he argues that these quarrels raise the question of which of the different and conflicting things that the gods hold dear is truly just, and thereby he seeks to show Euthyphro that the question of justice is more fundamental than that of what the gods hold dear. Finally, having gotten Euthyphro to agree that piety is a part of justice, while having demonstrated how hard it is to make headway in ascertaining precisely in what justice consists, Socrates leaves Euthyphro deprived of his presumption to know plainly the will of the gods and altogether too humbled and distracted to persist with the suit against his father.

You could say that the moral of Plato's text is rather conservative: one should respect law and follow custom because thinking for oneself leads to unnatural and immoral conduct. Or, with equal plausibility, one could learn a liberal lesson: religious fanaticism must be tamed by showing those who presume to know divine will that religious traditions are self-contradictory, and that reason supplies human beings with all the knowledge they need to live a moral life. Yet there is more to be said and learned. Like Leibniz, Plato thinks that the question of how the divine is disposed toward human beings is a question of the first importance; but, whereas Leibniz's universal jurisprudence presupposes that reason can derive or demonstrate the principles of justice and divine caring, the Platonic dialogues together suggest the profound problems that inhere in the attempt to determine in what divine caring and the just by nature consists.

For Leibniz, and for Riley, Platonism stands for the affirmation of the existence of "eternal moral verities." In reducing Platonism to a doctrine, they scant one of Socrates's most provocative and persistent claims: that his peculiar wisdom—a "human wisdom," as he calls it in the *Apology*—consists in a knowledge of what he does not know. Socrates's human wisdom is a form of skepticism, because it argues that we lack complete and satisfactory knowledge of the most important things. But it is no ordinary skepticism, because it shows that the knowledge we lack is the most important knowledge. For this reason, Socrates makes the need for metaphysics, and the lack of metaphysics, central to the philosophical analysis of morality and politics.

Skepticism is the Socratic tribute to metaphysics. Metaphysical speculation is not the foundation or ground of Platonic political philosophy, as Leibniz and Riley (and not a few others) would have it. It is, rather, the culmination of an arduous ascent, an ascent that, as Socrates suggests in the *Theatetus*, begins in wonder; and it is led upward through an examination of the complex intimations embedded in common opinions and ordinary desires. Such a view of metaphysical speculation does not provide direct and unambiguous support for justice understood as universal benevolence (or for any other conception of justice). Still, in an age in which dogmatic slumberers have taken to sleepwalking in broad daylight and boasting of their wakefulness in the public square, at a time in which the leading lights condescend to the philosophy of the past while presiding over the reduction of the philosophy of the future to an enumeration of their own likes and dislikes, a bit of Socratic skepticism can win for the mind some valuable room for maneuver.

Metaphysics grows out of the desire to understand. Like all good things, it is easier to mock and to misuse than to respect and to use well. Many arts and sciences—indeed, most forms of inquiry—can proceed quite nicely and solve a host of problems before coming up against the questions of metaphysics. About this, there can be no doubt. The problem is that the impulse to metaphysics cannot be postponed or squashed without abolishing the mystery in man. As Patrick Riley demonstrates, Leibniz's difficulties are not only more pleasant than the complacencies served up by contemporary thought, they are also more useful, since they remind us of our incompleteness and shed light on what making ourselves whole (and really intelligent) would require.

The great mistake is to suppose that if Leibniz failed to reconcile freedom and divine determination, or to show how evil can exist in a world created by a good and all-knowing God, or to derive a universal jurisprudence from rationally established first principles, then his philosophy was a failure and holds no more than antiquarian interest. Nor is it sufficient to honor Leibniz for the moral uplift that his philosophy can provide in a weightless and self-regarding age. Leibniz's philosophy commands our attention because it clarifies the claims that the conception of a divinely ordered universe has on human beings. It does not provide a solution to our problems, but it performs the valuable service of casting light on the problems posed by the solutions that we favor.

The professors who smugly fancy themselves to have transcended metaphysics, who are sure that God and an enduring rational order have no place in serious thinking, are the true Panglossians. They denounce those who claim to know the true character of the world, and then make the same claim for themselves. Their remedies constrict the heart and bind the intellect. But the problem of freedom, the challenge of evil and the question of God will not go away just because they turn their backs on them. They claim to speak for ordinary people, but they do not respect them sufficiently to acknowledge that ordinary people are bothered by evil, drawn to justice and keen to make sense of the conflict between them. Theodicy is not only an activity of believers or aristocratic rationalists. The search for essences is more common, and therefore more "pragmatic," than the enemies of essences allow.

The impulse to undertake the metaphysical journey is awakened by the perplexities in ordinary language and spurred onward by the wonders presented by ordinary life. To be sure, poets of all ages have warned of the dangers of philosophical flight: getting lost in the clouds, suffering dizziness and nausea from the rarefied air, approaching too near to the sun. And wise students of politics ancient and modern have cautioned against the disasters that await cities and states that put their trust in inferences drawn from abstract speculation. And they are right. Metaphysics does not move mountains, and it will not save the world. It cannot cure the common cold or put bread on the table. But those are not all the things that a human life demands.

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HOLLYWOOD DIARIST

Season's greetings

IT'S THE GLORIOUS SEASON OF expectancy here, the time between the announcement of the Academy Award nominations and the sacred ceremony itself. And I mean sacred. This pre-Oscars interval comes at precisely the time of year when ancient pagan peoples awaited the vernal equinox, when Christians count the days to their supreme ritual of rebirth, Easter, and when Jews prepare for Passover. This year, the nominations were reported in newspapers on the morning of Ash Wednesday, which begins the Lenten season that precedes Easter. And the movie stars will stream, godlike, into the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion a few days after the equinox, right at the start of Holy Week. Tell me there's not some sort of profound spiritual substitution going on here. In a town where seasons basically don't exist and where the metaphysical generally takes a backseat (way back) to the material, isn't it possible that the Oscars are this odd community's way of celebrating the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth?

AS A RELIGIOUS CONCEPT, REBIRTH tends to be pretty abstract, but the rebirth that occurs here at Oscar time is quite tangible. *Variety* reported that, within hours of the nomination announcements, the movie companies rolled out massive ad campaigns to cash in: "At Miramax, Fine Line, October, Gramercy and TriStar, plans were set in motion to capitalize at the box office on a best pic benediction. [Note that word choice!] Their mission: to ride the six-week box office wave until Oscar night and pocket as much as $30 million."

I'VE DREAMED OF HOLLYWOOD godhood. About four years ago, while I was working as a reporter for *The Washington Post*, a colleague and I decided we would write a screenplay about a Washington murder. Since my colleague (she's now my fiancée) was covering Hillary Clinton at the time, we figured we had inside material richer than anything an L.A. hack might concoct. We convinced two friends to join us, and after a few meetings we had a plot outline we all thought rather ingenious: the White House chief of staff, Vance Hartage, is found shot to death on the grounds of his Virginia estate, and it looks like murder. (This was, I should note, before Vince Foster committed suicide.) A *Washington Post* reporter named Lee Fuller (Matthew Modine), who had covered Hartage before, is assigned the story. There's a tough Virginia detective named Carolyn Keating (Ellen Barkin), a Buddhist billionairess (Natasha Richardson), a suspect in the U.S. Senate (William Shatner), a dramatic revelation on "Nightline" and much more, all leading to a surprise ending: the reporter turns out to be the murderer. It seems that Fuller had been a star, a golden boy headed for a Pulitzer, until Hartage fed him a false story that ruined his brilliant career. The murder was Fuller's revenge.

WE INSERTED TOUCHES we imagined to be Lynchian or Altmanesque. We thought our dark ending boldly un-Hollywood. We argued about how much money we should demand. We worked diligently for a year and finished the thing, sending it off to a personal contact at one of the big Hollywood agencies. She said she was sure, without even reading a page of our work, that one day we'd be thanking her from the stage of the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, as billions watched. We sort of believed her.

THIS YEAR, THERE IS MUCH NOISE about how the Academy has fallen hopelessly in love with "independent" films, which are promoted as the artistic foil to crass, schlocky, dollar-driven Hollywood. It's the first time in the history of the Oscars that four of the five nominees for Best Picture came from outside the big studios, though the big studios often *own* the companies that support these films. Since I arrived here a few days ago to work on a piece about Hollywood journalism, movie folk have been rhapsodizing to me about one of the indie filmmakers, Billy Bob Thornton, the current avatar of artistic integrity. Thornton wrote, directed and starred in *Sling Blade*, for which he received a Best Actor nomination. It's touching to watch the most hardened Hollywood cynics cling to his success as their current reason to get out of bed in the morning, as if Thornton were Our Savior, sent down to L.A. to redeem the industry from its manifold sins. One actor explained to me his theory that the triumph of Thornton and the other indies justifies the existence of depressing figures like Stallone and Schwarzenegger: "This city needs these guys," he says of Sly and Arnold. "They make so much money for the studios that it allows *Shine* and *Sling Blade* to be made." These independents sound a bit dependent to me. What defines an "independent" anyway? What, for instance, does *Sling Blade*—which cost $1 million to make and sometimes feels like Flannery O'Connor was behind the camera—have in common with that other famous independent, the $33 million film *The English Patient*? To me, the latter was empty of authentic human or moral content, despite its nice scenery and costumes reminiscent of early Banana Republic catalogs. The only commonality I see is that both movies come to us from Miramax, a subsidiary of Disney, which doesn't sound very independent at all.

THE L.A. MUST-READ OF THE moment is John Gregory Dunne's *Monster*, an account of the eight years the author and his wife, Joan Didion, spent writing the unfortunate Redford-Pfeiffer vehicle *Up Close and Personal* for Disney. If you want to know why, despite all the cash and energy expended on them, big movies still come out artistically dead, this book is a kind of pathology report. One problem seems to be that everyone in the business thinks he's a font of profound originality, a point that came home to me when I read Dunne's excerpts from a 1992 Disney memo on the status of the film's emerging plot. The character later played by Redford is a reporter the memo limns as "one of the brightest lights in the Washington press corps until a White House bigwig fed him a false story.... When the truth came out, Warren lost his chance for a Pulitzer.... "

THAT MEMO WAS WRITTEN ABOUT A year before we started our script, which means we were not only unoriginal, but late. After we sent the finished product to the powerful agency, there was an extended silence. Then a heavy package arrived, with a note from our connection. "How are ya, love? An agent here whose judgment I trust read your piece—not great. But—he is constructive, which is why I adore him. He suggests you read the enclosed.... Look at character development.... Keep plugging. Let's talk soon." The postscript: "I still absolutely believe that you will be thanking me before billions! I can't wait!" Enclosed was the screenplay for *Chinatown*, so badly photocopied it was nearly illegible. We never even tried to read it. We'd already seen the movie countless times. And what was the point? We were mortals, after all.

WILLIAM POWERS

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THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI. AS CELEBRATED BY MILTON G

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